THE

VAISHNAVITE REFORMERS OF INDIA

CRITICAL SKETCHES OF

THEIR LIVES AND WRITINGS

BY

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CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION.

These are a series of Seven Essays on the Lives and Writings of the principal religious reformers of the Vaishnavite or Visishtadwaita School of India. The treatment is critical and historical; but special prominence has also been given to the literary side of this School's activity. A clear account of the growth of Vaishnavaism is intended to be conveyed by these Lives of Eminent Reformers, and reference has throughout been made to the development of doctrines. A special chapter is devoted to the exposition of the Visishtadwaita philosophy according to Ramanuja. The growth of Vaishnavaism in Northern India is briefly dealt with in the last Essay, that on Sri Chaitanya, wherein that great Saint's career is also fully described.

The Vedantic school of India consists of three main sub-divisions, whose founders, as popularly understood, are the great philosophers Sankaracharya, Ramanujacharya, and Madhwacharya. All these are Vedantists in the sense that they acknowledge the infallibility of the Upanishads, and follow its teachings, though differing in their interpretations of the same. All these three systems or at least the first two are of considerable antiquity. Sankara was preceded by Goudapadá, and he, by earlier teachers; and these again seem to have branched off from an earlier adwaitic school, which preached the one-ness of God, very possibly without the Maya-doctrine. The Ramanuja School, as we show in these pages, had an ancestry of great repute, commencing from the sage Bodhayana, who was perhaps

only slightly removed from the author of the Vedanta Sutras, known as Badarayana and unanimously identified by Indian writers with Vyasa, the author of the Mahabharata. And if the Visishtadwaitic school in its practical and Sectarian aspect, is identical with the ancient *Bhagavata* School, and there is every reason to suppose, then indeed we shall be justified in saying that the origin of this school is to be fixed at some centuries prior to the Christian era. It is impossible to fix the exact dates of the Sutras, or the Bhagavadgita, or the earlier *Pancharatra Tantras* which are the foundation of the Bhagavata school; and any speculation as to their probable dates has not hitherto resulted in much positive good. But there are enough materials in existence from which the continuity of the Vaishnavite philosophy and traditions can be inferred; and the object of these pages is, in the main, to show the outline of the history of the Vaishnavite religious movement, as far as may be gathered from the literary works and traditions prevalent in the community.

Colebrooke, whose name is unmistakably connected with the origin of accurate knowledge in almost every department of Sanskrit scholarship, has left a clear, if brief account of Ramanuja's Bhashya, and the Visishtadwatic School. Next to him Dr. Thibaut, whose labours in the field of Indian research, have earned for him the gratitude of all Hindus who value their philosophy, has made Ramanuja's Bhashya accessible to scholars by his monumental translation of the same. The Commentary on the Bhagavad-Gita, by Ramanujacharya, has been rendered into English by Mr. A. Govindacharya of Mysore, and is a useful book for reference. But with the exception of these works, the vast Vaishnavite literature, philosophical and religious, is yet inaccessible to the English-knowing public.

Some idea of its extent may be gathered from the references in these pages, wherein the most important works are named and their contents briefly described.

The Vaishnavite literature of South India has been deeply influenced by the Tamil works of the Alwars, of whom a brief account is to be found in the beginning of the last of the essays of this series. The Alwars were practically the earliest Brahmin missionaries to the South. They propagated the devotional aspect of the Vedanta in the Tamil land, and used the language of the people with great effect. The present work does not deal with their lives and writings, beyond making the brief reference already alluded to. But the Tamil poems of the Alwars will repay careful study by Tamil scholars interested in examining the history and progress of Vaishnavaism in India.

The teachers and reformers whose lives are described in these pages comprise, with one exception, the leading Vaishnava philosophers of South India, from the earliest time known to us. It will be seen that there is a continuity of the list from at least the beginning of the 9th century to the end of the fifteenth century. We have not cared to devote much space to questions of chronological nicety, for the simple reason that the traditional dates of these writers are in the main extremely probable and sufficiently accurate. In one instance, however, we have, at some length, discussed the date, namely the date of Sri Vedanta Desika's death; and this we have done, to explain an apparent discrepancy between the traditional date and the date disclosed by a Srirangam Inscription. As to the correctness of our conclusion on this point we leave it to specialists in Indian chronology to judge.

In the preparation of these pages, we have laid under contribution many existing works, literary and

philosophical, in Sanskrit and Tamil, that have reference to Vaishnavaism. The Tamil *guruparamparas*, of which there are two or three recensions, are however the fullest biographies available and they have been fully utilized. Among works in English to which we are indebted, we must mention Mr. A. Govindacharya's numerous works on Vaishnavaism and especially his extensive Life of Ramanuja. Other works used by us are referred to in the course of these pages, and need no specific mention here.

The Life of Sri Chaitanya has been added here, as an example, and a remarkable example, of the product of Vaishnavaism in Northern India. It is not, however, clear that he owed anything directly to Ramanuja's teachings or the works of his School. But we have every reason to suppose, as we point out in the essay on Sri Chaitanya, that the Vaishnava Renaissance in Northern India was the result of Ramanuja's propagation of this faith in the South, and for this reason, we have traced the growth of Northern Vaishnavaism as an introduction to Chaitanya's Life.

In conclusion, we hope that in placing these pages before the public, we shall induce some at least who feel an interest in the development of Vaishnavaism, to examine the original materials and work out an ample history of which we have ventured to present the barest outline.

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T. R.

Nathamuni.

DURING the latter half of the 9th century A.D. and the beginning of the 10th, there lived in the town of Srirangam, near Trichinopoly, a learned Vaishnavaite scholar named Ranganathacharya, more usually called Nathamuni, or the sage Natha. He is credited, in popular tradition, with having reached the fabulous age of over 500 years and to have closed his career at about 920 A. D He was a native of Viranarayanapura, the modern Mannargudi, of the Chidambaram Taluk, in the dominions of the Chola rulers of the day, who had not yet risen to the greatness which preceded their final decline in the end of the 13th century. He was probably a descendant of early Vaishnava immigrants, from the banks of the Jumna and other parts of the north, who carried the Bhagavata or the Pancharatra cult to the south and laid the foundation for the spread of Vaishnavaism during the second to the seventh centuries of the Christian era which were the palmy days of the Pallava rule. The period just mentioned was the period of the Vaishnavaite Alwars, of whom the most revered is Satagopa or Nammalwar and the last is Tirumangaialwar. The latter was a contemporary of Tirugnana Sambandhar, the Saiva saint, and of the Pallava ruler Narasimhavarman I. of Kanchi (A. D. 625—645). The earlier

Alwar must have lived long before this period, possibly in the opening years of the Christian era. He was a native of the city of Kurukai, now Alwar-Tirunagari, near Tinnevelly, on the Tambraparani, in the kingdom of the Pandyas, and composed over a thousand stanzas in classical Tamil.

The literature of the Alwars presupposes a thorough knowledge of the Krishna stories and the stories of the earlier avatars of Vishnu, and the frequent impassioned references to such stories, even in the songs of the earliest of the Alwars, show that the South must have been flooded with these marvellous legends at a very early period. The story goes that Nathamuni while at the Vishnu temple of Mannargudi (Chidambaram Taluk), his native place, heard some Brahmins from the southern end of the Peninsula recite Tamil verses of Satakopa addressed to the Vishnu God of Kumbhakonam and was charmed with their sense and diction. He also found that these verses concluded with the words "These ten out of the thousand, composed by Satakopa." Nathamuni, thus placed in the track of research, seems to have finally recovered the whole of Satakopa's works, and he then arranged them and the extant works of the other Alwars into four collections of about a thousand stanzas each. He is also said to have brought about the system of regular recitation of these texts during the festivals of the God at Srirangam and the system obtains even to this day in most ancient temples dedicated to Vishnu. Nathamuni was, we may take it, well-versed in the Sanskrit literature of the

day and is said to have been an adept in yoga and to have been the last to practise it in this part of India. He is said to have composed a work called *Nyayatatwa*, and a work on yoga philosophy, '*The Yoga Rahasya*.' Neither of the works seems to be extant now, but extracts from the former are given in the *Nyayasidhanjana*, a work of Venkatanatha, or the famous Vedanta Desika, a voluminous Vaishnava writer in Sanskrit and Tamil (A.D. 1269—1370), contemporary with the equally famous Vidyaranya, the Vijianagar minister. The Nyayatatwa seems to have been an elaborate treatise covering the whole field of philosophy from the point of view of the Ramanuja school and was developed further by later writers of the same school. Though possibly a good Tamil scholar, Nathamuni has left no Tamil work of his own behind, except a few memorial verses prefixed to the works of three of the Alwars, namely, Nammalwar, Vishnuchitta and Mathurakavi. Certain similar Sanskrit verses prefixed to the works of Nammalwar are also ascribed to him.

The ritual of worship as observed in Vishnu temples is based on two early standard works. One of them is known as the Vaikhanasa sutra, probably belonging to the black Yajur-Veda school. The other work is the Pancharatra Agama belonging to the extensive Tantra literature, popularly believed to have been composed by God Narayana Himself. In addition to laying down the modes of worship both in temples and at houses, the Agama contains rules of conduct for the Vaishnavaites and has a peculiar philosophy of its own,

namely, that of the Bhagavata cult. The system is, of course, of very ancient date and is referred in the Mahabharata; and the Badarayana sutras on Uttara Mimamsa are understood to refer to this philosophy in the four sutras that conclude Pada II of the 2nd *Adhyaya*. Nathamuni's contribution to the ritual was the provision for the recitation of the Tamil vedas, as the works of the Alvars came to be collectively called, on appropriate occasions during the main festivals of the God. The immediate effect of such an arrangement was the critical study of the *Tiruvoymozhi* as Satagopa's work is usually called; and, from this time forward, a school of combined Sanskrit and Tamil scholarship arose, which developed into great importance in later days and finally divided the Vaishnava sect into the two forms of the Northern and the Southern or the Vadagalai and the Tengalai sections. The first commentary on the work of Sadagopa was, however, written only in the twelfth century towards the close of Ramanuja's life by a pupil of his. We have no means of ascertaining whether Nathamuni was a complete follower of all the doctrines that now go by the name of the Ramanuja school, but as he is traditionally considered the founder of that school, it is to be presumed that he was. We shall see further on that his grandson, Yamunacharya has really laid the foundation for all the doctrines that now go under Ramanuja's name. The doctrine peculiar to the Ramanuja school and considerably elaborated by the religious teachers who succeeded him is the doctrine of

Prapathi or surrender to God in absolute renunciation and faith. This doctrine is considered to have some slight basis in the Upanishads, but is not referred to in the Sri Bhasya of Ramanuja. It is practically founded on the Pancharatra Tantra referred to already and is a cardinal doctrine of the Vaishnavaite in his practical religion. It is, however, said to have been accepted and brought into practice by the sage Satakopa himself and by Nathamuni after him. The details of the doctrine are a fruitful source of controversy among the followers of Ramanuja and a very respectable amount of literature is even now extant on the subject.

A few anecdotes of Nathamuni's life are not uninteresting and may be mentioned. Readers of the Ramayana will remember how that great work is said to have been published for the first time by being sung in the court of Rama himself by two musical pupils of Valmiki, the author, who afterwards turned out to be Rama's sons. The Tamil songs of Satakopa are similarly sung to this day at Srirangam and other places and Nathamuni is said to have set them to music soon after his discovery of the work. The music was however, of a celestial kind not easily appreciable by ordinary folk. It is said that a dancing girl of the time sang songs in the celestial tune in the court of the Chola king of the day whose capital was Gangaikonda Cholapuram, in the Trichinopoly District, not far from the birthplace of Nathamuni. The king is said to have slighted the musician as he could not appreciate the celestial note and to have preferred another singer

who sang the usual tunes. The former dancing girl soon after reached Viranarayanapura and sang before the god of that place and was warmly appreciated by Nathamuni as the music was after his own heart. The Chola king, on hearing of the Muni's appreciation, paid a visit to the shrine and meeting Nathamuni inquired the reason of his appreciation of the unfamiliar tune. It is said that Nathamuni directed a number of bronze cymbals of different weights to be sounded together and forthwith described correctly their different weights from a perception of the acute differences in the pitches of the notes. The king, admiring his peculiar powers, was satisfied of the superiority of the celestial tune to which the Tamil songs had been set. It may upset chronology, as ascertained at present, to be told that Gangaikonda Cholapuram was founded so early as the end of the 9th century, as it is usually associated with Rajaraja the Great, the Lord Paramount of Southern India who did not mount the throne till 985 A. D.; but we may take it that the site of the city was even then an alternative capital of the Cholas with Uraiyur, near Trichinopoly, which was no doubt the metropolis of the dominions. Contact with the Chola ruler is frequently mentioned both in the life of Nathamuni and of his grandson Yamunacharya and it is clear that the reference is to the Chola ruler when he went into residence at the secondary capital above referred to though no doubt both the sages spent a large portion of their later lives at Srirangam which was near the permanent capital Uraiyur. More correctly speaking,

Uraiyur had ceased to be the capital by this time. Tanjore had not yet become the capital of the Cholas

Another anecdote in the life of Nathamuni connects him with the Tamil poet Kamban, the author of the Tamil Ramayana. It is said that this future Poet-Laureate of various kings composed his grand poem at the residence of his first patron Sadagopa Mudaliar at Tiruvannainallur, generally assumed to be the place of that name in the South Arcot District, and went about the country reading out portions of his work and soliciting favourable opinions of scholars. On reaching Srirangam he had to face an assembly of Pandits presided over by Nathamuni. It would seem that the latter was at first not appreciative but was finally won over by the intrinsic merit of the production. It is also supposed that an existing poem of over 100 stanzas on Satakopa is by Kamban and was composed to honour the Vaishnava Alwar This anecdote may appear to be the invention of Tamil scholars of the Vaishnava persuasion to bring the eminent Kamban into the fold of the admirers of Satakopa and Nathamuni and is incompatible with the general opinion that Kamban was the court-poet of Kulottunga I. who reigned from 1070 A.D. But there is a tradition embodied in an ancient Tamil verse that Kamban composed his Ramayana in the Saka year 807, corresponding to A.D. 885. If this is to be relied upon as accurate, there is no inherent improbability in the story of young Kamban meeting the sage Nathamuni who must have been then well advanced in years.

In accordance with the custom of the times, Nathamuni went on a tour to Northern India, visiting the scenes of Krishna's birth at Muttra and the neighbouring places. His travels extended to the distant Badari or Badrinath on the north, Dwarka, Krishna's capital in Kathiawar on the west and Jagannath on the eastern coast. Nathamuni's travel was apparently for pilgrimage and not for religious propagandism, as was that of Sankara before him or of Ramanuja afterwards. It was in commemoration of this visit, with his son and daughter-in law, to the banks of the Yamuna or Jumna that his grandson, born about A.D. 916, is said to have been named Yamuna. Nathamuni returned to the south in due course via Jagannath and is said to have lived a few years only after the birth of his grandson.

The story of Nathamuni's death is worthy of the ardent devotee that he is reputed to have been. One day a party of huntsmen headed by the Chola king rode past the residence of Nathamuni at Viranarayanapura. The sage, interrupted in his meditations by the attendant bustle, opened his eyes and, construing the party to be the divine Rama and his brother, on whom, we may suppose, his thoughts were wholly bent in meditation, followed the track of the party and walked with weary steps till the very gates of the Chola capital Gangaikondapuram, and there dropped down dead through sheer fatigue. His son Iswaramuni, the father of the famous Yamunacharya, duly discovered his whereabouts and did the funeral obsequies which the remains of the illustrious man demanded. The dura-

tion of Nathamuni's life must be left undetermined, as we cannot accept as reliable the traditional accounts which assign a period of from 350 to 500 years for the sage. We must, for the present, be satisfied with supposing that the sage was born somewhere in the first quarter of the ninth century and that he lived just over a hundred years, an age exceeded by Ramanuja himself, by Vidyaranya, and by his contemporary, Vedanta Desika, if the traditions that can be proved to have been current from the fifteenth century downwards be accepted as true.

Pundarikaksha.

NOTHING strikes us so peculiar to Hindu religious life as the high pedestal on which the spiritual teacher is placed and the implicit faith which the community has in him for weal or woe. Nor is the feeling one of recent growth. The Chandogya Upanishad says: "Only when studied under a teacher does any knowledge become excellent." Again "He who has a teacher alone knows." The Kathopanishad proclaims: "He who loves the Lord intensely and loves his Guru as the Lord Himself, is alone fit to receive the Highest Wisdom." And the Bhagavad Gita in Ch. XIII mentions the worship of the Acharya as an attitude worthy of attainment by the aspiring devotee. The puranic literature, as may be expected, amplifies these sentiments with exemplary stories of devotion and blind obedience on the part of the pupils. The story of Ekalavya in the Mahabharata is frequently referred to as to the efficacy of Guru-worship even when the Guru himself is indifferent. For this Ekalavya, who was refused instruction by Dronacharya, the famous teacher of the Pandus and Kurus, set up an image of Drona and, by ardent practice in the inspiring presence of that image, attained to such eminence in the use of the bow and arrow that Drona himself was staggered, and rather cruelly demanded the surrender of his thumb, which order the pupil duteously obeyed. It is

therefore, a characteristic feature of the Hindu pupil that he is brought up under a system which places the personal influence and inspiration of the teacher as a more potent factor in effective instruction than all the industry and the intelligence of the pupil himself. And great teachers, geniuses though some of them have been, have studiously refrained from asserting any doctrine as of their own invention and have always modestly and gratefully referred to their Guru as the origin of all their power and the source of their inspirations. The word 'Upanishad' has been interpreted to mean 'Secret doctrine' or '*Rahasya*' and the greatest caution is observed before a teacher will freely impart it to a pupil. It appears to us moderns a mistaken policy to restrict the spread of knowledge of whatever kind, and the spirit of secrecy or disinclination to teach the greatest truths seems more worthy of the inventor of a new manufacturing process, jealous of the infringement of his rights and desirous of turning his knowledge to the best pecuniary advantage. The explanation seems to be, in part at least, that in times when manuscripts were rare or possibly writing was unknown, all knowledge was confined in the memory of a few learned men and the system continued long after the need for it ceased. But there was another factor in question which certainly helped to perpetuate the system of secret instruction. That was the necessity felt by the teacher to ascertain the fabric of the pupil's mind and ensure its being of a sufficiently close texture for the purpose both of re-

taining what is imparted by him and of afterwards utilising it for the pupil's further spiritual advancement. It is not a proposition difficult to maintain that certain positions in philosophy appear untenable to minds constituted in one way but are lucidly self-evident to other minds that have had a different course of preparatory training. This is to some extent true of the material sciences as well but these latter are more dependent on the conclusions of observation and experiment in the external world than the science of the soul and its relationship to the cosmos and the universal Self. Hence in spiritual matters all teachers of the world have insisted upon the necessity of a certain reserve in imparting serious instruction to pupils who are only yet feeling their way or possibly are adversely inclined. In the view of those teachers (and they are a majority) who hold that realisation of the Self is the ultimate goal of man and has to be learned by constant practice in seclusion and with the senses under control, the presence and active advice of one who has experience in the process are absolutely necessary. It is, therefore, not strange that for ages India has held the spiritual Guru to be indispensable and "*Acharya-devo bhava*" the motto of every student under spiritual instruction.

We have been led to make these reflections for the purpose of explaining the system of maintaining succession lists of teachers among the followers of every sect of Hinduism and more especially the Ramanuja school. The head of this list is Saint Satagopa, the

author of the Thousand Tamil Songs, referred to already and the next name is that of Nathamuni himself, of whose life a brief sketch has been given already in these pages. In spite of the long interval of time between these two sages, the fact of the one being named as the other's successor is explained by the statement made by the followers of this school that Nathamuni saw the saint in Yogic vision and was directly instructed by him. We may, however, take it that for historical purposes the founder of both the theoretical and practical aspects of the Visistadwaita school in its outline is Nathamuni himself and that this great teacher had a respectable following of pupils imbued with his views and of sufficient learning to maintain them in controversy. Sage Nathamuni is said to have had eight pupils, of whom Pundarikaksha was the most important and is recognised as having continued the spiritual teachings of his preceptor. He is said to have been born about A. D. 826 at Tiruvallari, North of Srirangam, in the Choliah caste of Brahmins. It is said of Pundarikaksha that on one occasion he was deputed by Sage Nathamuni to escort his wife Aravindappavai to the residence of her father Vangip-purathachi as he was called. While there, Pundarikaksha who was of inferior caste was served with stale food, regardless of his being an honoured guest from the residence of Nathamuni. The latter on hearing of this fact and that the pupil himself never resented the apparent indignity but accepted it cheerfully as a favour, was greatly pleased with Pundarika's indifference to honour, and,

noting it as a mark of high spiritual advancement, called him by the name of "Uyyakkondar" or "Saviour of the new Dispensation," a name by which he is now usually known. We had occasion to mention on a previous page that Sage Nathamuni made a visit to the banks of Jumna in the North and had a son, born to Isvara Muni, his son, named Yamunacharya after the God of that place. We are assured that Nathamuni foresaw the birth of the child some years before the event and commissioned his pupil Pundarikaksha to be spiritual guardian of the boy and instruct him in the ways of the new faith. Nathamuni, in his later life, was frequently subject to spiritual trance, an ecstatic state known as *Samadhi* when the subject sees nothing but God and is practically lost to the external world. Nathamuni was, we are told, in this *Samadhi* state for long periods at a time before his final end and in consequence had entrusted to Pundarikaksha the duty of instructing his grandson whose arrival he had fondly been watching. Pundarikaksha in his turn commissioned his senior pupil Ramamisra, a native of Manakkal, also near Srirangam, to perform the office of Guru to the long-expected grandson. Ramamisra is the next in spiritual succession after Pundarikaksha and is chiefly remembered as the spiritual instructor of the great Yamunacharya, of whom we shall have more hereafter. Neither Pundarikaksha nor Ramamisra is known to have left any literary work behind them. We may suppose that their time was chiefly taken up with teaching and consolidating the

doctrines of the New School of Sri Vaishnavas which had their origin with Sage Nathamuni as we have seen already. The saintly and exemplary lives of these men and their adoption of the Pancharatra cult must have contributed to their being respected by the community in general and followed by an ever-increasing group of ardent followers. A new religious creed usually courts strong opposition by adopting an aggressive attitude, but the early Vaishnavas of whom we are writing seem to have been very mild and non-aggressive in their ways and to have been treated by the surrounding community with kindliness and respect.

The truth is that both the Adwaita and the Visistadwaita Schools were the simultaneous expressions of a natural reaction from the sacrifice-ridden *Purva Mimamsa* schools of Guru and Kumarila, which held the field in philosophical speculation during the centuries immediately preceding the times of Sankara, and were in their turn the outcome of the disgust at the development of philosophical Buddhism and its levelling and atheistic tendencies. The Vaishnava School, instead of starting with a daring new philosophy, collected the forces of conservatism by accentuating a life of purity and high morality, and gave the death blow to sacrificialism which had out grown its original purpose and begun to deny God; while the Monism of Sankara won the sympathy of the intellectual among the community by its all embracing subtlety and covert denunciation of mere Karma and Vedic ceremonial under the guise of the doctrine of

illusion. It is difficult historically to say whether the subordinate place assigned to Karma-kanda in the two new phases of Hinduism was the result of an unconscious adjustment to the state of things that had resulted from the sustained attack of Buddhism on the sacrificial system generally, or, whether the original founders of these systems perceived the philosophical absurdity of inculcating the worship of various powers of the Earth and the Heavens simultaneously with the doctrine of Unity of God which was the corner-stone of each of the systems. Whatever the reason may be, the fact is clear that sacrificial observances were relegated to an inferior place in both these systems, though not boldly rejected as injurious or degrading. To the school of Sankara, the performance of ritualistic karma is a hindrance to true spiritual progress. It may be tolerated till the true vision of unity arises, but is afterwards of no further use. The Visistadwaitic School disapproves of all karma which is done for worldly or transient results and considers that the best antidote to its evil effects is the renunciation of all attachment to the fruits thereof. While theoretically therefore the Karma Kanda is valid and binding in the view of both systems, the practical effect is, as indicated above, that it stands neglected by Vedantins throughout except for purposes of deriving exegetical rules for application in the later Mimamsa.

It is for this purpose rather than as a help to the performance of sacrifices that the *Purva Mimamsa* has been studied in the ages after Sankara.

The study has been a matter of mere academic interest and the maxims evolved from the various sections of the old Sutras were applied to the interpretation of the Upanishads and of the Smrithis, sometimes relevantly, sometimes as the fancy of the author suggested The latest and the best exposition of the subject, in the *Bhatta Dipika* of Khandadeva, of about the eighteenth century A. D., learned as it is by the profuse admixture of the terminology of modern Sanskrit logic, makes no attempt to explain the *modus* of the rituals, but, taking it always for granted, discusses the *ratio-decidendi*, so to speak, of each topic with a subtlety, and power of expression which only those trained in the logic school can appreciate. We mention these matters to show that neither the fact of the continuous study of the Mimamsa in later times nor the performance of occasional sacrifices by Brahmins under the patronage of petty rulers of various States, need blind us to the fact that the sacrificial system lost its real hold on Brahminic India several centuries back, and that the main cause was the effect of covert antagonism towards that system of both the Sankara and the Ramanuja schools.

The special influence of Vaishnavaism on the South Indian people, an influence which had its origin in the times now discussed, and has continued its action down to the present day, is of a two-fold character. In the first place, it loosened the hold of its followers on the various minor gods and goddesses who were generally propitiated with a view to the

attainment of various worldly objects. An early Smrithi work like the voluminous digest of Hemadri, or *the Madhaviya*, shows the vast number of puranic ceremonies, *vratas*, fasts and feasts which were observed by the Hindus generally in honour of various deities like the sun, the moon, the planets, etc., on almost every imaginable day on which a particular *Tithi* or *Nakshatra* or a stellar or lunar conjunction happened to fall. Some of these ceremonies were considered *Nitya* or compulsory and some were *Kamya* or optional. But it became the fashion to resort to them largely and no doubt the main motive-power in keeping up the system was the full employment it furnished, and the remuneration it offered, to the Brahmin class, especially when the sacrifices fell into comparative disuse. Now Vaishnavaism checked this elaborate ceremonial by interdicting its votaries from the worship of any deities except the highest known to it, who was the God Narayana of the Upanishads, the primal cause of all things. The stringent, if somewhat illiberal observance of the Sri Vaishnavites in not recognising, as objects of worship, deities other than Narayana, had its origin in the desire to carry to its logical conclusion the principle of the Unity of the godhead and the undesirability of praying for any worldly benefits in the presence of the deity. The cosmopolitanism of the Adwaitin to whom one personal God was as good as another and both were simply of 'phenomenal' importance, it is not open to the Vaishnavite to adopt. Though the exclusiveness of the

Vaishnavite in the choice of a name to his one Deity is apparently of questionable merit at the present day and has sufficed to dub him as sectarian and bigoted, his attempt to free Hinduism of all but the purest form of worship of a single Deity deserves to be appreciated. Dr. Thibaut has pointed out that there is nothing sectarian in the philosophy of the Ramanuja school. In practical religion, devotion to one Deity was the teaching of this school, and the object was to elevate Hinduism to its pristine purity before non-Aryan influences had played upon it and instilled into it Tantric ritual and diversity of divinity

Again, the rapid conversion to Vaishnavaism of large numbers of the masses of the people who were beyond the influence of Brahminism and mere philosophy, is another notable feature of this school, the germs of which we perceive even in the earliest times. While the Vedic Hindu strove to brand the non-Aryans as 'Dasyus' or 'thieves' and kept them at a distance, early Brahminism improved upon the treatment by making a monopoly of religious instruction and keeping Sudras and the lower orders generally outside its pale. In fact both the Mimamsas have constructed what they call the "*apa-sudra-adhikarana*" wherein they demonstrate that none but those of the three higher castes are entitled to recite the Vedas or undertake the study of the Upanishads. The Smrithis have further prescribed choice punishments for the Sudra who breaks the rule or even listens to a Vedic text when being chanted. In the face of this strict monopoly, it is to

the credit of Vaishnavaism that it has been able to bring the lower classes into its fold and extend to them the privilege of knowing God and of attaining liberation. The agencies employed by Vaishnavaism in effecting this silent revolution were two in number, referred to already in a different connection in the life of Nathamuni One of them was the doctrine of *prapatti* or surrender to God, which was conceived as demanding no caste status or educational qualification The other was the adoption for religious purposes of the works of the Alwars and making them the common property of all classes, Brahmins and non-Brahmins alike. The former of these matters will receive some detailed notice on a future occasion and need only be referred to slightly at this stage.

We shall find in the succeeding articles that these special features of Vaishnavaism, namely, the tacit discarding of Vedic sacrificial ritual, the worship of a single deity, and the adaptation of the religion to the needs of non-Brahmins—features which have been described in some detail once for all now, as they have been present at the very beginning—were constantly kept in mind by each succeeding generation of teachers and contributed largely to the popularity and rapid spread of this form of Hinduism

Yamunacharya.

THE chief incidents in the life of Yamunacharya are narrated in the existing works on the lives of these teachers with an amount of unanimity which goes far to show that what we now know about him is fairly accurate and reliable. He was born in the city of Viranarayanapura, the modern Mannargudi, in the South Arcot District, a few years after the beginning of the 10th century A.D. As the grandson of the great Nathamuni, he was doubtless well-cared for and properly educated in the Sanskrit lore of the day. It was Ramamisra, the pupil of Pundarikaksha, who helped the father Iswara Bhatta to initiate the boy Yamuna in the study of the Vedas, after he was duly invested with the sacred thread at about the age of eight. His intelligence and retentive memory soon attracted attention and placed him at the head of his schoolmates. We are told that the precocious boy would often slip away from school, and, when chid about his truancy, would reply that he had nothing new to learn for the day, but that his fellow pupils were simply going over what he had already learnt.

The teacher of Yamuna was a scholar who gloried in the expressive title of Mahabhashya Bhatta or Doctor of Grammar. The doctor, albeit his learning, was but a poor pundit and had to submit himself to

one Akki Alwan, the Court Pundit of the Chola King at his capital Gangai Kondapuram. Akki Alwan, basking in the sunshine of royal favour, lorded it over all the pundits of the day, and our Bhatta among the rest, by exacting a yearly tribute from them. The collector of the tribute, on one occasion, reached Yamuna's school when his teacher was away and explained the purpose of his call. In a spirit of bravado Yamuna replied that no tribute would be given and that Alwan might be so informed. The angry reply came in due course that Alwan would not tolerate the impertinence, and that the unruly pundit must stand a contest of disputation with him or submit at once. Yamuna quieted his trembling teacher who was all for submission to the cruel Court Pundit, and sent a spirited verse* in reply intimating that he was capable of holding his own and beating down the enemy in any shashtraic disputation. We are next told, that the king at the instigation of his sagacious consort, who foresaw, not without some relish, trouble for the unpopular Alwan, sent the state palanquin and a bodyguard to escort the bold scholar who was to beard the lion in his den.

Yamuna, now a hero to the village, came with a large group of friends, who proclaimed in the manner usual in Oriental Courts, the learning of Yamuna and his matchlessness in Mimamsa and Vedanta scholarship.

* न वयं कवयस्तु केवलं न वयं केवलतन्त्रपारगाः ।
अपितु प्रतिवादिवारणप्रकटाटोपविपाटनक्षमाः ॥

A romantic touch is given to the succeeding incidents by our being told that the royal pair watched Yamuna entering the palace, and the queen, prepossessed by the young and, no doubt, attractive face of the Brahmin scholar, went so far as to claim a victory for him in the approaching contest. The king, piqued into supporting his Pundit, staked half his kingdom, we are told, on the event. Yamuna was duly escorted to the royal presence and took the place assigned to him A Vedantic disputation then commenced in which, we are told, Yamuna gained a complete victory and Akki Alwan had to accept the public defeat.

The story of Yamuna's victory will not be complete without our adding that Yamuna is said to have propounded three puzzles to Akki Alwan at his own request, and that Akki Alwan in dismay, was powerless to answer them. These puzzles were in the form of statements of which Akki Alwan undertook to establish the negative by his arguments. They were Our king is all supreme; the queen is chaste; your mother has issue. It is easily seen that to admit the propositions implied in the negatives of the first and second of the above, would have been highly ungrateful and imprudent in the Court Pundit, while the absurdity of the negative of the third is patent to all. We shall not waste our time in expounding Yamuna's supposed answers in support of these rather silly statements. It is only proper to add that the incident of the puzzles is omitted in some accounts of Yamuna's life and may be a later addition intended to give zest to the story of

the victory. It is more to the purpose to state that the gracious Chola queen in great pleasure hailed Yamuna as '*Alavandar*' in Tamil, meaning 'the victor,' a name by which Yamunacharya has been best known ever since, and that the king, true to his promise, granted him a portion of his territories to rule and enjoy.

The remainder of Yamuna's life is divisible into two portions, the respective durations of which we have no means of ascertaining. During the first portion, he was in enjoyment of the lands granted by the king and lived a life of pleasure and luxury. He had married and had four sons. He lived in a palace and had a large retinue. He forgot the higher life lived by his grandsire Nathamuni, and the latter's poor followers and pupils could not gain access to the presence of the lordly Alavandar. At last, the awakening came. Ramamisra, the pupil of Pundarikaksha, succeeded, after great efforts, in gaining an interview with Yamuna, and intimated that he was in charge of a valuable treasure of Nathamuni, in trust for Yamuna. Yamuna agreeing to receive it, the two went together to the shrine of Srirangam, where Yamuna was led to the presence of the Deity by Ramamisra and made to accept Him as the treasure that Nathamuni had left for his grandson. Yamuna, whose eyes were now fully opened to the evils of the unprofitable life that he had hitherto led, accepted the duty of love to God in all humility, and, throwing up his life of a householder, assumed the garb of a Sanyasin, pledged to a wholly spiritual life.

He took up his residence at Srirangam and led a life of absolute renunciation, composing philosophical works and expounding the doctrines of the Visistadvaitic school. Srirangam became a stronghold of Vaishnavaism. Worship at the temple and participation in the regular services both in and out of the temple precincts furnished occupation for a large number of the ardent devotees, while the lectures of Alavandar and the frequent discussions held in his presence gave great impetus to Sanskrit study in general and that of the Upanishads and the Sutras in particular. The Upanishads, the Gita, and the Vedanta Sutras, had long before this established their claim to pre-eminence in Hindu philosophy and had been styled 'the three *Prasthanas*' or primary works on philosophy. Every off-shoot of Hinduism from the time of Sankara downwards based its main doctrines on its own interpretations of these three important works; and the pioneers of Visistadvaitism naturally turned their energies towards the task of textual interpretation of the same three works. In Yamuna's time, the work of oral interpretation was proceeded with, while the formal composition of text-books on the subject was reserved for the next generation under the guidance of Sri Ramanuja.

It is well to bear in mind in this connection that the Visistadvaita school claims a venerable ancestry for its origin, commencing almost from the times of the author of the Sutras, Vyasa or Badarayana. A sage Bodhayana composed a *Vritti* or extensive commentary

on the Sutras. The doctrines of the Vritti are understood to be refuted in many places in the existing commentary of Sankaracharya, although, following a well-understood literary etiquette, the actual author Bodhayana is not quoted by name. A gloss on the Vritti is known to have been composed by Acharya Tanka who is quoted frequently in the works of Ramanuja under the style of *Vakyakara* or glossator. Dramidacharya, a scholar of the Tamil land as his name implies, then wrote a fuller exposition of the Sutras and this came to be called the Bhashya. The references to the Bhashya in Ramanuja's works are to this commentary. One *Srivatsanka* is also mentioned as the author of a commentary on the Dramida Bhashya. He seems to have been also a very ancient writer as he is styled 'Bhagavan,' a term of great reverence. Another writer Guhadeva by name, also wrote a work on the Visishtadvaita philosophy. But all that we possess of these works from that of Bodhayana to that of Guhadeva are the names of the authors and a few short extracts from the Vritti and the Bhashya in Ramanuja's works. However, there is no doubt that in Yamuna's time there was an extensive literature of the Visishtadvaitic school continuing the traditional interpretation of Bodhayana and diverging in important points from that of the Sankara school. Yamunacharya himself refers, in his *Siddhi Traya* to be presently mentioned, to a series of authors of both the schools who preceded him and composed works explanatory of the Sutras. They are the Bhashyakrit (ap-

parently Dramidacharya) Srivatsankamisra, Tanka, Bhartriprapancha Bhartrimitra, Bhartrihari, Brahmadatta, Sankara, and Bhaskara. The first three names belong to the Visistadvaitic, and the rest apparently to the Sankara or allied schools. The Dramidabhashyakara, whose name is otherwise unknown, preceded Sankara and wrote a rather concise commentary on the Sutras. He seems also to have commented on the Upanishads, and this commentary seems to have been an extensive work, so says Anandagiri, the well known commentator of Sankara's works, in the opening lines of his gloss to Sankara's Chandogya Commentary.

We may mention also that the *Vedartha Sangraha* of Sri Ramanuja helps us somewhat to supplement the information on ancient writers given by Yamunacharya. Ramanuja mentions a list of over seven authors, namely, Bodhayana, Tanka, Dramida, Guhadeva, Kapardi, Bharuchi, etc., and the commentator Sudarsana Bhatta explains that Tanka was also known as Brahmanandin, a fact vouchsafed for by Vedantadesika also in his commentary *Tatvatika* on the Sri Bhashya. There is no doubt that Tanka is the Vakyakara referred to in later works, and that he preceded Dramida in the exposition of the Sutras. The fact that Dramidacharya wrote an extensive bhashya on the Upanishads from the standpoint of Visistadvaita also shows that Sankara was not the pioneer in this kind of work, a fact admitted by Sankara himself, and also explains why Ramanuja and others of his school before him did not set about a regular commentary of the

Upanishads. Dramida's work has, however, been entirely lost and the only convenient and full commentary on the Upanishads possessed by the Visistadvaitic school is that of the learned Rangaramanuja Muni, a writer of comparatively recent date, not to be confounded with the great Ramanujacharya.

The *Sidhi Traya*, of which mention has been made already, is the first and most important of the works of Yamunacharya. It contains 3 sections called the *Atma-Sidhi*, the *Iswara Sidhi*, and the *Samvid-Sidhi* and is intended to establish the real existence of the individual and supreme souls and refute the doctrine of Avidya. It is written in a stiff prose style mixed with terse *anushtubh Karikas* in the manner of early philosophical works of which the *Tantra Vartika* of Kumarila Bhatta furnishes a good example. The last section is entirely in verse and is somewhat incomplete. As in the *Sloka Vartika*, (as the first part of Kumarila's work is called) the language is spirited and frequently graceful. In one place our author says, in declining to accept a mere assertion of the opponent, "All this dogmatism may carry weight with (blind) believers; we are non-believers (in your doctrines) and require logic to convince us"* A most rational position this, which every school of Hindu thought, not excluding the author's will do well always

* हन्त ब्रह्मोपदेशोऽयं श्रद्दधानेषु शोभते ।
वयमश्रद्दधानास्स्मो ये युक्तिं प्रार्थयामहे ॥
88 Sidhi Traya, Benares Ed

to bear in mind. In refuting the absolute-identity doctrine derived by Sankara from the Upanishad text '*Ekamevadwitiyam*,' our author makes a statement of some historic interest. He says, "To say that the Chola king *now reigning* in this country, is *all* supreme and without a second, can only exclude the existence of another monarch equal (in power) to him, it cannot imply the denial of the existence of a wife, sons or servants of such a monarch."* Though the king is not mentioned by name, we may probably identify him with the Chola King Rajaraja the Great A.D. 985—1012), the undoubted Lord Paramount of India at the time, who fully deserved the epithet '*Samrat*' or 'Emperor' here bestowed on him, as he conquered the Vengi kingdom, Orissa, and Ceylon, defeated the Rashtrakutas, and was the most powerful of the whole of the Chola dynasty. It is interesting to observe from the list of commentators given above that the great Bhaskara, mentioned after Sankara and known as the founder of the Bhedabheda Vada, preceded our author. A reference to '*Sowresam Vachas*' in the Atma-Sidhi, also shows that our author was well-acquainted with the able commentary on the Sankara Bhashya by Sureswaracharya, the pupil of Sankara. We have been able to trace no explicit reference either to Goudapada, the predecessor of Sankara, or even to the Nyayatatwa of

* यथा चोलनृपः सम्राडद्वितीयोऽस्ति भूतले ।
इति तत्तुल्यनृपतिनिवारणपरं वचः ॥
न तु तत्पुत्रतद्भृत्यकलत्रादिनिवारणम् ॥

Nathamuni, which latter work, of course, our author must have known well. We shall in this connection content ourselves with giving one specimen of the subject-matter of Sidhitraya, which will at the same time furnish a sample of the style of the author in philosophy metrically treated. Says Yamunacharya* : "The 'Individual Soul' is a separate entity in each body, which is by nature, eternal, subtle, and blissful. It is distinct from the body, the senses, the mind, the vital air, and the intellect, and is self-contained." The Sidhitraya is quoted frequently by Ramanuja and no doubt was largely the basis of his able refutations of Sankara's views in the Sri Bhashya.

The next work of Yamunacharya that we shall notice is the *Agamapramanya*, a work the object of which is to establish the orthodoxy of the Bhagavata or Pancharatra school. Mention is made of a *Kashmira-Agamapramanya* of the same author at the end of the former work; but the work is lost now and nothing is known about it except that it sought to establish the genuineness of the *Ekayana Sakha*, the fundamental text of the Bhagavata school, as a branch of the Veda. The Agamapramanya, is, like the Sidhitraya, in prose and verse, the verse being generally in Anushtubh metre and used only when a sententious *resume* or pointed exposition is deemed necessary. We had occasion to refer to the Pancharatra school more than once

* देहेन्द्रियमनःप्राणधीभ्योऽन्योऽनन्यसाधनः ।
नित्यो व्यापी प्रतिक्षेत्रमात्मा भिन्नः स्वतः सुखी ॥

before, and we shall use the present context to make some observations in detail about that school. It is well-known that the various Vedas were studied in different *Sakhas* or recensions. One of these was the Ekayana Sakha—probably of the White Yajur Veda. The various Sakhas had different ritual books, dealing with the domestic rites of his followers; the Apasthamba of the Black Yajur Veda may be mentioned as an illustration. It is an article of absolute faith among the twice-born of India that every person should stick to his Sakha and perform only the ceremonials prescribed in it. The *Ekayanins* had several such special rites. One peculiarity in their daily life may be mentioned. The Ekayanin, who, in austerity of life, was almost a monk, but without the restriction of celibacy divided the day into five periods. First came the period of *Abhigamana* or approaching God, which the Ekayanin did as soon as his daily ablutions and *Japas* were over. The next period, from about half-past eight to midday, was allowed to be devoted to wordly life, the earning of one's livelihood by irreproachable means, etc. This was called the *Upadana* period. The next period was styled *Ijya*, literally, *sacrifice*. The Ekayanin cared not for the Vedic sacrifices. His sacrifice was the *Pancha-yagna* ending with the midday prayer to God, the placing before Him of all that he had prepared of food etc., and included his meal-taking, which was considered an act of religious nature. The next period was that of *Swadhyaya*, or study, which each householder regulated as suited his taste or capacity. The

last period of the day of 24 hours thus divided was called *Yoga* or quiet contemplation, when thoughts of the Almighty engaged the devotee before he went to bed. This simple-living Ekayana sect of almost pre-historic times seems to have grown into the Bhagavata sect even before the period of the Mahabharata and to have developed for itself a large sectarian literature which came to be known as the Pancharatra Tantra. The Tantra literature of India, [illegible] the Pancharatra, the Bauddha, the Saiva or the Pasupata, and the Sakta branches, is so very extensive that it would fill a library by itself. It is not proposed to describe this, even if it were possible to do so. It is enough to say that the Pancharatra appears to have been one of the earliest of these and was so called because it was supposed to have been promulgated during five nights by God Narayana himself. It is now only partially extant and a small portion only again is available in print in Telugu character. The Tantra is divided into various *Samhitas* which bear the names of various sages or ancient writers. The most important of them are the *Satwata*, the *Poushkara* and the *Jayakhya* samhitas. These are described as *Divya* or uttered and promulgated by God Narayana directly. The others were promulgated through various sages, whose names, as in the case of Smriti writers, is legion. In one work alone, the *Pancharatraraksha* of Vedanta Desika, as many as thirty of these are named, and many of them must have been long, judging from the numbers of the chapters quoted. The chief topics dis-

cussed are the modes of service in temples, the details of a Srivaishnava's or Bhagavata's life, and the most suitable general method of salvation, namely, *prapatti*, mentioned already in these pages. It speaks much both for the antiquity of the sect and its literary activity that the works are collectively mentioned in the Mahabharata and some of the ancient puranas, with approval and not in condemnation. The large number of non-Brahmin conversions made by the followers of this sect later on must have reacted on the Brahmin portion of it, and practices unusual among the Brahmins of the day must have crept in, which brought some disrepute on the sect as a whole. This explains why Sankaracharya in his commentary on the four Sutras II 2 42 to 45 treats them as intended to refute the orthodoxy of the sect in matters wherein it differs from the rest of the Brahmin class. The Bhagavata, unlike the various heretical philosophers whose views are already criticised in the second pada, admittedly upholds Brahman or Vasudeva as alike the material and the instrumental cause, like the Vedantin. Why then is he being refuted? Sankara explains, "On this point he is all right, but there are some tenets of his which are unvedic and so Badarayana refutes him" What Badarayana exactly meant to state in the four Sutras referred to is not clear. According to Sankara they mean: "the Pancharatra is unacceptable (1) because it speaks of the creation of the soul as Sankarshana from Vasudeva, while the soul in the Vedanta is eternal; (2) because it inculcates the production of

the mind from the *Jiva*, a thing equally unvedantic; (3) to suppose that the forms Sankarshana and the rest are identical with Vasudeva, would not mend matters, as the four-fold division would still be purposeless; and (4) lastly, the Tantra shows mutual contradictions in itself." This interpretation of the Sutras as the statement of four adverse arguments against the orthodoxy of the Pancharatra is elaborately opposed by Yamunacharya in the Agamapramanya, and the Visistadvaitic view is further set forth in the Sri Bashya. From these we gather that the four Sutras in the view of this school are not all adverse, but that the first two of them contain *prima facie* adverse arguments, while the last two refuse those arguments and maintain the orthodoxy of the Tantra. The last two Sutras would then stand thus:—" (3) But by taking the four forms, Vasudeva and the rest, as identical with Brahman, the objection, as to the soul's being born, is removed, (the purpose of the manifestations, like that of Avatars generally, being explainable always) and (4) the Tantra explicitly denies the fact of the souls having an origin." In other words it is said that the Pancharatra could hardly be discredited as containing points of erroneous philosophy which it has not, as practically admitted in the 3rd of the Sutras by Sankara himself. To confine ourself to the question of interpretation of the Sutras and not to dwell long on a subject which could hardly interest the general reader, one fact may be mentioned which goes far to show that the Visistadvaitic interpretation may in this, as in

other cases, as pointed out by Dr. Thibaut, represent an earlier tradition which Sankara or his predecessors ignored. That is, the use of the particle च in the middle of the Sutra 3 of the set is most usually indicative of a change of side in the argument, both in the Purvamimamsa and in the Vedanta. We can point out at least 5 other places in the Vedanta Sutras, especially in pada 3 of Adhyaya III, as instances of this use of the particle; and such instances of this use of the particle, and such instances are also so numerous in the Jaimini Sutras that the argument appears very convincing indeed. On the other hand, it has to be said in favour of the Sankara view that the Tantra must partake of the heretical nature of the other philosophies in whose company this is also found discussed. Against this, again, may be set Dr. Thibaut's opinion that 'it would not be unnatural to close the polemical pada with a defence of that doctrine which—in spite of objections—has to be viewed as the true one.'

The next work of Yamunacharya deserving mention is the summary of the Gita teachings styled *Gitartha Sangraha*. No work of Yamunacharya shows so well as this does, how far Ramanuja was indebted to his predecessors in the elaboration of the Visishtadvaitic system which he so completely carried out. In the *Sangraha*, Yamunacharya, in the course of about 30 verses in *anushtubh* metre, analyses fully the argument in the Bhagavadgita, as understood by the school represented by him. The Bhagavadgita is a work which, in spite of its great antiquity and sanctity, and

apparent simplicity, has baffled many commentators and critics. To some, it appears full of contraditions; to others, it is a patchwork of three or four layers set one over another To others again, the central theme is clear, while the work is full of digressions and repetitions. In this state of things it cannot but be important to know that as early as the 10th century, Yamuna, following antecedent oral teaching, analysed the work as a consistent exposition of the doctrine of Bhakti supplemented by a description of the Karma and Gnana Yogas as subordinate to the main doctrine. Unlike the case of the Vedanta Sutras, there is no internal indication here of the existence of any specific commentaries of the text, at the time of Yamuna's writing; but the probabilities are that Yamuna summarised the teachings handed down to him orally, rather than invented his system of interpretation We have ample internal evidence in the *Gita Bhashya* of Ramanuja that he strictly conformed in his interpretations to the outline depicted in Yamuna's epitome. The general scheme of the Gita according to Yamunacharya my be described in a few words. We are told that the first six chapters of the 18 into which that work is divided, treat of Karma and Gnana Yogas, and close with a description of the Yoga state; the second batch of six chapters treat of Bhakti Yoga, while the last six deal with subsidiary topics which help towards the understanding of the rest, and conclude in verses 65 and 66 of Chapter XVIII with the enunciation of what is held to be the essence

of all the secret teachings that have gone before. Yamuna, and following him, Ramanuja, work out the continuity of the thought in the whole work in a much more natural manner than is possible to infer from Sankara's explanations of the same poem. We cannot of course affirm that there are no forced constructions in Ramanuja's commentary; but we have found in many places where a different interpretation would suggest itself to us that Ramanuja adopted his construction specially to suit himself to the plan chalked out by Yamuna. We have in mind especially Chapters VIII and XII of the Gita, two short but extremely difficult chapters, where Yamuna's scheme of interpretation is closely adhered to, with a result that can hardly be called satisfactory from the point of view of the critical reader.

There is mention made of a work 'Mahapurusha Nirnaya' by Yamunacharya which is now lost to us; but of one other existing work we wish to make mention, on account of its high literary merit and the great hold it has on the mind of the religious Vaishnavaite. We refer to a devotional song or Stotra as it is called of about 75 stanzas, somewhat like the *Soundaryalahari* of Sankaracharya, but dedicated, as may be expected, to God Vishnu. The language is simple and chaste, the imagery is natural, and the sentiments are those of an earnest devotee who pours out his heart in the most direct language he can command. The work has been styled a '*Stotra-ratna*,' a gem of its class, and is explained by an ample commentary from the

erudite scholar and philosopher, Vedanta Desika.* Having regard to this work of Yamuna, we may say of him that he combined in himself the characteristics of a poet and a philosopher, in a more real sense than we can do so of any other Sanskrit writer who claims such a distinction.

The personal life of Yamunacharya at Srirangam, where he mostly stayed after his spiritual conversion, was simple and without any stirring incidents. Religious persecution was never serious in India, and in the south, the Cholas, the chief reigning dynasty, were, at least at this time tolerant to the new faith, though they were of the Saivite persuasion. Yamuna was peacefully devoting himself to religious teaching and meditation. He once travelled as far as Trevandrum on the western coast to visit there the shrine of *Sri Padmanabha*, and returned home after the usual tour round the numerous Vishnu shrines in Travancore, Tinnevelly and Madura. It was by reason of this trip that Yamunacharya missed an engagement with one Kurukaikavalappan, a pupil of the great Nathamuni, to whom the latter had entrusted the secret of Yoga or quick realisation of the vision of God. This holy man, requested by Yamuna to impart the great secret to himself, had fixed a particular date as that on which he would do so, that being also the time which the Yogi had, by his powers, ascertained to be the date of his death. Yamuna discovered when too late that he had missed the day assigned, and

* The text and commentary have been recently published at the Ananda Press, Madras, in Nagari characters.

thereby helped unconsciously, it is said, to make the secret of Yoga perish for ever with the said pupil of Nathamuni.

Another trip which Yamuna undertook, late in his life, was to Conjeeveram, whither he went, it is said to cast a look on the rising scholar Ramanuja, who, as yet a student, was early distinguishing himself and attracting the attention of all. Yamuna with the help of Kanchipurna, a Sudra pupil of his at Conjeeveram, who has since become canonised and has at present a special idol and shrine erected in his honour in the modern town of Small Conjeevaram, obtained a view of Ramanuja, but as the latter was in the company of his master Yadavaprakasa, an adwaitic teacher, he did not care to send for him or converse with him. After visiting the shrines at Kanchi and spending some time there, Yamuna duly returned to Srirangam. Yamunacharya lived to a good old age and died, it is said, at about 1040 A.D., having expressed with his last breath an earnest wish to see Ramanuja established at Srirangam as a staunch supporter and defender of the Vaishnavaite faith, a wish which Ramanuja was duly to fulfil in a most thorough manner. Yamunacharya left many* pupils behind him, some of whom had the privilege of instructing Ramanuja himself in various branches of study. The most important of such pupils were *Mahapurana*, *Goshtipurna*, *Sri Sailapurna* and

* As many as twenty are mentioned. See Mr. A. Govindacharya's Life of Ramanuja, p. 23. Sri Vedanta Desika gives a list of 15 in his *Rahasyatrayasara*.

Maladhara. Chotta Nambi and Pillai Arasu Nambi are named among his sons, but they are of no importance to the student of Vaishnavaism. We shall, therefore, address ourselves to the life and teachings of Ramanuja in the next article.

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Ramanujacharya.

WE shall in this article describe briefly the chief events in the life of the great Ramanujacharya, the practical founder of the Visishtadwaita system, referring to the names and characteristics of the most important of his immediate followers, and shall conclude with a short summary of his philosophy as disclosed in his works.

We have seen that by the end of the tenth century A.D., Visishtadwaitism had greatly developed under Yamunacharya and had obtained a strong foothold in Srirangam with Conjeevaram, Tirupati, and a few other places, as rallying centres for the followers of this creed. Yamuna felt that among his immediate followers, there was no one who could exactly fill his place as the head of the New Dispensation. He, therefore, cast his longing eyes around among the younger men and surmised from personal observation and general report that the young Ramanuja, then a pupil under Yadavaprakasa, was, by intellect and character, the fittest person that could succeed him. He did not, however, wish to precipitate matters, but allowed them to take their own course, trusting that, under the guidance of Providence, all would end well.

Sri Sailapurna, already mentioned as a disciple of Yamunacharya, was established at Tirupati Hills, in

service at the Temple of that place. He had two sisters, one of whom, Kantimati was married to one Kesava Somayaji of Sri Perumbudur about 10 miles from the Trivellore Railway Station, near Madras. This lady gave birth to Ramanuja, about the year 1017 A.D., and the uncle, Sri Sailapurna came down from the hills and was pleased at the benign and intelligent face of the child. He looked after the boy carefully and duly got him invested with the sacred thread at the proper age. After the usual preliminary studies in which Ramanuja, as may be expected, showed great capacity, a teacher, Yadavaprakasa by name, was selected for the higher course, and Ramanuja duly went to study with him. Here he was joined by a cousin of his, another nephew of Sri Saila, and the two, in the usual fashion of the day, boarded with the teacher and acquired proficiency in the secular sastras. When it came to the study of philosophy or the Upanishads, Ramanuja found his master's explanations unsuited to his taste. He took objection to the interpretation of more than one passage, and suggested his own meanings, which hardly pleased the teacher. A coolness arose in consequence between master and pupil; we are told that the former, in combination with the other pupils, formed an unholy conspiracy to take Ramanuja on a long journey to Benares and get rid of him there. The unsuspecting Ramanuja accompanied the party; but while travelling in the jungles of the Vindhyan outskirts, his cousin Govinda Bhatta, into whose ears the news of the nefarious intention

towards Ramanuja had oozed, appraised him of the impending danger and bade him escape somehow. Ramanuja, in sore straits, struck into a by-path and lost his way. The party proceeded without him and discovered, when too late, that he had slipped away. In great distress and much fatigued, Ramanuja wandered over the thickets, for a long time, unable to decide upon his course. He then met, as if by chance an old hunter and his wife, and of them he inquired the way. They said that they were going to the Satyavrata Kshetra, *i.e.* Conjeevaram, and bade him follow. The three travelled all the night. Towards dawn, the old man asked Ramanuja to fetch some water from a neighbouring well. When Ramanuja came back with the drink, the pair had mysteriously disappeared, and Ramanuja found to his wonder and delight that he had miraculously reached Kanchi itself, the tower of whose temple was visible to his eyes. He sped home, feeling sure that God in his mercy had come to his help. In due course the party of Yadava reached Conjeevaram after their travels and surprised to find Ramanuja, made up to him, as if nothing had happened. Ramanuja resumed his studies with Yadava, as before, but with some hesitation. The Adwaita interpretations displeased him more and more. It also happened that Yadava, called to exorcise an evil spirit that possessed the daughter of the King of the place, failed to quell it. The spirit, however, bowed to Ramanuja who accompanied Yadava, expressed its opinion of his greatness and departed in

deference to his wishes. This incident embittered Yadava towards Ramanuja who had finally to give up his studies under such an uncongenial master Ramanuja then attached himself to the service of the Devaraja Perumal at Kanchi where Kanchipurna, a non-Brahman disciple of Yamunacharya, was in daily attendance on the God This devotee had the reputation of being in close touch with the God of his worship, who, it is said, assumed the ways of men towards the favourite and held discourse with him in human language

Meanwhile Mahapurna, a disciple of Yamuna, who had been despatched by the Acharya and his followers to persuade Ramanuja to go to Srirangam and formally accept the new faith, reached Conjeevaram for the purpose, and with the help of Kanchipurna succeeded in his object. Ramanuja gladly agreed to pay his respects to the far-famed Yamuna and the two started towards Srirangam. They duly reached the northern bank of the Kaveri, when lo! a great concourse of Vaishnavas made their appearance in mourning procession, and Ramanuja ascertained, to his irreparable sorrow, that the great Yamuna had breathed his last and was being buried with holy honours on the banks of the Kaveri. Ramanuja hastened to have a last look at the body of the great guru and was surprised to see that three of the fingers of his right hand were closed in a deadly grip. He asked the bystanders if they were usually so. They replied that shortly before death, the veteran teacher had expressed three wishes and had closed his fingers in the act of counting them. The wishes were

that a Visistadwaita bhashya should be composed on the Sutras of Vyasa, and that the names of Parasara, the author of the Vishnu Purana, and of St. Sadagopa should be perpetuated as a mark of gratitude to the two great men named. Deeply affected, Ramanuja proclaimed that, God willing, he would undertake the duties named and accomplish them speedily. No sooner was this statement made than the fingers opened out, we are told, of their own accord, and the assembled Vaishnavas herein read a sure sign of the coming greatness of the young man who stood before them. Ramanuja duly attended the obsequies of Yamunacharya but left Srirangam immediately after, and reaching Kanchi, resumed his duties there, in the company of the pious Kanchipurna.

Ramanuja was deeply impressed with the saintly character of this man and felt drawn towards him. Not caring for his inferior social status, he invited him for meals in his house and instructed his wife (for he had now married and had set up house-keeping for himself) to prepare food for him. The purna, after his temple services, went up to Ramanuja's house and being pressed for time, took his meals at once and departed, leaving word for Ramanuja who was away, that business called him back so suddenly. Ramanuja returned and saw his wife clearing the leaves on which the purna had taken his food, and washing generally the place and bathing herself to get rid of the impurity of the Sudra's contact. Ramanuja, who had, out of piety and respect, intended to wait upon Kanchipurna and eat

after he had dined, (a thing unusual for a Brahman) felt greatly disappointed. He gently rebuked her for her illiberal spirit and felt that he was ill-matched in her

Yamuna's death at Srirangam had left a void which his disciples were anxious to fill up; and old Mahapurna was again despatched to bring Ramanuja. As chance would have it, Ramanuja also thought of going up to Mahapurna for spiritual instruction, now that Yamuna was dead, and actually commenced his journey south. The two met at Madurantakam, and the impatient Ramanuja requested Mahapurna to instruct him in the mantra of the Vaishnavites immediately Mahapurna complied, and the two proceeded to Kanchi, where Mahapurna (and his wife who had accompanied him) lodged in Ramanuja's residence. Ramanuja pursued his religious studies under the new guru and had a happy time of it. This was, however, marred by a petty quarrel which arose between the ladies, and Mahapurana, afraid that Ramanuja will take it too much to heart, if further ill-feelings arose, suddenly left Kanchi with his wife and proceeded to Srirangam. Ramanuja, who was away at the time of the incident, returned and finding from enquiry that his wife's pettiness was mostly to blame for the quarrel, felt sorely the affront to his master and feeling displeased with her altogether, sent her to her father's home finally, resolving to abandon the house-holder's life. He went to the presence of the God of Kanchi and there, with due ceremonies, donned the red

robes of the Hindu Sanyasin, and thus broke all his family ties.

From the temple precincts of Kanchi, Ramanuja practised his austere Sanyasin's life and soon attracted followers. A native of Kuram, a neighbouring village was the first to be drawn to him. Kuresa, as he was called, was a wealthy and learned Brahman and became a life-long friend and follower of Ramanuja. Dasarathi, the sister's son of Ramanuja, was another who came to him and was one of his most beloved pupils ever after. Other persons sought him out, became his pupils and accepted his teachings. Yadavaprakasa, his old teacher, was, we are told, persuaded of the error of his views, and abandoning his tenets and position as an adwaitic Sanyasin, voluntarily chose to be converted under name of *Govinda Yati* and counted himself among his supporters. He composed a work on the duties of Sanyasins (*Yatidharma Samuchchaya*) which exists to this day. We have no means of ascertaining whether this Yadavaprakasa is identical with the one mentioned in the Bhashya and later works, as the author of the *Bheda-abheda* doctrine allied to the Bhaskara school; but tradition asserts that the two are identical. There is no allusion in any of the existing lives of Ramanuja that the Yadavaprakasa under whom he studied and whom he later on converted was anything put a pure adwaitin of the Sankara School. If this Yadava had developed a new philosophy materially differing from Sankara's, it is strange that no allusion is made to that fact in the existing lives. It is, however, certain that

Ramanuja did controvert and defeat a Yadavaprakasa in his life-time, for both Anthrapurna, contemporary and disciple of Ramanuja, and Vedanta Desika, a follower of Ramanuja, who lived in the 14th century, testify to the truth of this fact in their respective works, laudatory of Ramanuja.

To proceed. At this juncture Ramanuja had another call from Srirangam which he, willing to take his place as the leader of the community, gladly accepted, and started south. He took Dasarathi with him and reaching the outskirts of Srirangam was met in advance by an eager concourse of devotees who took him in procession to the quarters intended for him and installed him formally as their spiritual superior in the seat of Yamunacharya. Meanwhile an incident happened to Kuresa which led him to abandon his riches and migrate to Srirangam followed by his wife. This was nothing less than a report at Conjeevaram that the rumbling noise of his huge palatial gates closing at nights disturbed the God at Kanchi. Kuresa was ashamed of the vanity which the rumour implied and abandoning all his wealth to the poor, went with nothing but the clothes he wore and his wife similarly clad, to join Sri Ramanuja at Srirangam. There he adopted the life of a mendicant and lived on the alms which he begged from day to day. It was also now that Ramanuja was gladdened by the news of the conversion of Govinda Bhatta, his cousin and fellow pupil, who had all this time been a staunch Saivite, doing service in the Kalahasti temple. His uncle Sri Saila, at Rama-

nuja's request, converted him after some trouble and brought him over to Tirupati. Later, he joined Ramanuja, assumed the garb of a Sanyasin and became an important disciple under the name of Embar.

About this time Ramanuja defeated in controversy and also converted an adwaitic scholar, Yagnamurti by name, who became a Sanyasin on his defeat and Ramanuja's disciple under the style of Devaraja Muni.

Even before the date of some of these conversions, Ramanuja had himself to study patiently, after joining the Srirangam Mutt, under various teachers, who were the pupils of Yamunacharya, and specially held in reserve, as it were, instructions intended for Ramanuja. One of them was Goshtipurna, who, after trying Ramanuja eighteen times by compelling him to travel all the way from Srirangam to the Madura District, where his place was, at last deigned, after exacting promises of secrecy, to impart to him certain important teachings. Ramanuja once in possession of them, straightway called together a group of men and proclaimed loudly the truths he learned with so much difficulty. The furious guru asked him to explain his conduct, and Ramanuja said that he did not care if perdition was his fate for the transgression, but that he valued more the saving of men's souls. Thus did Ramanuja open out the hearts of even his conservative teachers and prepare the way for the breakdown of narrow prejudices. The other teachers of Ramanuja also found that he had more to teach them than they had to impart. Such were Mala-

dhara and his uncle Sri Sailapurna. The latter instructed him in the truths of the Ramayana in the course of an extended visit of nearly a year which Ramanuja spent at Tirupati for the purpose.

Ramanuja now thought of composing philosophical works and committing to writing the special views which he was developing orally. One of the first works that he composed was the *Vedartha Sangraha* wherein he tackled the principal Upanishads that lent themselves to adwaitic interpretation, established the unsoundness of such interpretation, and expounded his own views. The very first of such passages is the famous one of the Chandogya Upanishad wherein occurs the enigmatic sentence, '*Tat twam asi*,' 'that thou art' which is the corner-stone of all adwaitic expositions. He also attacks in this work the doctrine of Maya of Sankara, and the Bheda-abheda doctrines of the Bhaskara and Yadava schools. Then he sets out his view of the ultimate truths and gives his method of reconciling Vedic passages. He then takes up the question, of great religious importance to Hindus, and a matter of severe contention in disputations, whether the Supreme Deity is to be styled Narayana or is to be identified with Siva or some of the other Gods known to the Upanishads, and concludes by establishing that the former alone is explicitly named as the Deity in both his personal and impersonal forms. This controversy of names, it will be seen, is independent of the dispute between Adwaitism and Visishtadwaitism and there are plenty of confirmed adwaitins

to whom God as Vishnu or Narayana is the object of worship.

Ramanuja now addressed himself to his *magnum opus*, the Bhashya on the Vedanta Sutras. We have explained on a previous occasion that Ramanuja's interpretation followed the *Bodhayana Vritti*, a very early gloss on the Sutras composed long before Sankara's time and essentially representative of the very views which Ramanuja expounded. To get at the manuscript of the *Vritti*, which was unavailable in Southern India, Ramanuja, it is said, had to travel to Kashmir with Kuresa and other pupils. With considerable difficulty, he obtained permission to read the manuscript but not to take any copy of the same. Kuresa of wonderful memory committed to heart important passages in the simple act of reading them once and relieved Ramanuja of all anxiety as to his being unable to make a copy of the work and take it with him. The party then returned to Srirangam and Ramanuja composed the Bhashya, Kuresa being the amanuensis. It seems that Kuresa, who remembered the *Vritti*, never actively suggested any objection to Ramanuja's exposition, but where any error crept in, in the nature of a disagreement with the *Vritti*, he simply would not write down any further, and Ramanuja took the hint and usually amended the text. We have clear testimony that Ramanuja had access to passages in the *Vritti* before he composed the Bhashya, and it is also unlikely that he went all the way to Kashmir once for the purpose of seeing the

manuscript and again during the course of the long tour round the Peninsula to be mentioned later on and before which he is said to have completed the Bhashya. The fact may be that Ramanuja procured the *Vritti* from some library in the North, but not from Kashmir; or perhaps his reference to stray passages was from traditional quotations and he really was enabled to verify his references only at Kashmir; or lastly, we may suppose that the work was really composed after his return from his long trip and Ramanuja utilised the study of the *Vritti* in the composition. The Sri Bhashya is the work of a mature intellect, and there is nothing improbable in supposing that Ramanuja's views, settled by the ordeal of frequent controversies during his trip, were committed to writing, after his return, in deliberation.

After the composition of the Sri Bhashya, Ramanuja composed two epitomés of the same, a short one, the *Vedanta Sara* containing the Sutras and a simple gloss, and the *Vedanta Dipa*, a work on the same model, but fuller in discussion and exposition. Both works are valuable aids to the study of the Sutras and deserve to be better known, though it must be admitted that they are thoroughly eclipsed by the masterly *Sri Bhashya*. Ramanuja also composed a commentary on the Bhagavat-Gita, known as the *Gita Bhashya*, a work of great merit, the result of considerable thought, which has since been amply expounded by the classical commentary *Tatparya Chandrika* of Sri Vedanta Desika. The other works of Ramanuja are the *Gadya-traya* and

the *Nitya*, works devoted to practical religious purposes and requiring no further notice.

The grand trip of Ramanuja round the Peninsula now requires mention. With a large following of disciples and with the express object of visiting various shrines and incidentally controverting opposition to his views, wherever it may arise, Ramanuja started from Srirangam He first travelled east, visited Kumbhakonam and the shrines of the Shiyali Taluk near the scene of Thirumangai Alwar's birth. He then turned south and visited the shrines of Madura and Tinnevelly and in the latter district visited Alwar-Tirunagari and the neighbouring shrines where St Sadagopa was born and lived. From here he went to Rameswaram Returning to Tirunagari, he went to Malabar and Travancore, visited various Vishnu shrines scattered over these places and then marched northwards along the sea-coast to Girnar and Dwaraka in Guzerat, where Sri Krishna lived and ruled. Thence he went to Muttra, Govarthan, etc., places sacred to the memory of Sri Krishna. From these he went further north up the Himalayas to Badarinath He then visited Kashmir and stopped at Srinagar, where he is said to have been challenged by Saraswati herself, the Goddess of learning.

The text which Ramanuja was asked to expound at Srinagar was the famous passage in Chandogya, I, 6 7. "*Yatha Kapyasam pundarikam Evam Akshini*" lit. "As is the *Kapyasa* lotus, so were his eyes." The word *Kapyasa* has been interpreted by Sankaracharya as the "posteriors of the monkey." Sankara gave this

apparently literal interpretation, unaware of any other traditional interpretation, and excused the obvious awkwardness of the comparison by saying that it was only a simile subsidiary to another simile and was, therefore, of no harm. His meaning of the text would thus be, "The eyes of the Deity were like the lotus which resembled the (red) posteriors of the monkey" It will be seen that, apart from the unseemly comparison, Sankara requires the interpolation of another word 'like' for which the text gives no room. The text naturally implies that 'kapyasa' is co-ordinate with 'pundarika' Ramanuja therefore abandoned Sankara's meaning and interpreted *kapi* to mean the 'sun' or 'the rays of the sun'. This derivative meaning had been suggested to him by one of the early commentators, the Vakyakara Tanka, referred to before in the life of Yamunacharya, who interpreted 'kapyasa', as 'full-blown by the rays of the sun'.* Ramanuja improved upon this interpretation by exhausting the possibilities of derivative construction afforded by the word and which seemed suited to the context. His full explanatory meaning as given in the *Vedartha Sangraha*, (see p. 234 of the Benares Edition and the commentary thereon) is as follows:—The eyes of the Deity were beautiful "like a (red) lotus, *grown in deep water, standing on a strong stalk, and full-blown by the rays of the sun*"† We need hardly say that a com-

* *Aditya-Kshipta.*

†See also the Upanishad Commentary of Rangaramanuja Muni, Madras Telugu Edition, Chandogya, page 30, for a full exposition of this passage. Also *Srutaprakasika* (p. 465, Vol. I, Grantha Edition) on the Sri Bhashya at I. 1. 21.

munity which sets so much store by the personal aspect of God would consider a construction like Sankara's as an affront to Him, though of course Sankara intended no such thing and only followed an apparent popular meaning of the word '*kapa*.'

This interpretation of Ramanuja thoroughly satisfied Saraswati, we are told, and She blessed him and his Bhashya. Ramanuja, however, roused the ire of the adwaitic pandits of the place, who, defeated in open controversy, tried to encompass his life by dark means. Ramanuja and his party, however, escaped and descending the Himalayas, proceeded to Benares. From Benares he travelled south-east and reached Puri or Jagannath on the eastern coast and established a mutt there. Unable to introduce his mode of temple worship at Puri owing to the opposition of the priests, he left the place and proceeded to Tirupati. Here occurred what is considered a miracle in connection with the God of the Seven Hills. A dispute was raging at the time of Ramanuja's visit as to whether the God was Vishnu or Siva. It is claimed by the Vaishnavas that the God was Vishnu in the times preceding that of Ramanuja, as the Saiva saints dedicated no stanzas to him, though neighbouring Siva shrines were noticed. It also appears that in the times of an early Alwar who preceded St. Sadagopa, the God is described as wearing both Vaishnavite and Saivite symbols. A fruitful source of dispute seems to have existed in the place based on this dual aspect. It may be that in Ramanuja's time there was a fresh attempt to oust the Vaishnavites.

was now suggested that both Vishnu and Siva symbols should be placed before the God at night and that the decision as to the God's nature should follow any indication that He may give in the matter. This was done by Ramanuja and the people of the place, with the result that, early next morning, the God was seen wearing the discus and the conch, the symbols of Vishnu, to the neglect of the symbols of Siva also placed before him. Thus ended a controversy which has never cropped up again.

From Tirupati Ramanuja travelled south, visiting Conjeevaram, Tirukoilur, and Tiruvahindrapuram (Cuddalore) and lastly Viranarayanapuram, the birthplace of Nathamuni. He then reached Srirangam after completing successfully an extended tour of several years, during which he acquired great fame and largely increased his influence.

His life at Srirangam need not be described in detail. With great tact and ability he managed through his disciples the affairs of the Srirangam Temple entrusted to him, and at the same time instructed his followers and ministered to their spiritual wants. Hundreds of eminent men and women surrounded him and hung upon his words. His congregation included, we are told, 700 Sanyasins, 74 dignitaries holding special offices of ministry, and innumerable holy men and women who revered him as God. Ramanuja was now an aged man near 70, but was destined to live many years more and instruct his contemporaries. He was fond of his disciples and they reciprocated the feel-

ing. One of them, a son of Sri Saila his uncle, was bred up as a son to him and named Kurukesa, after St. Sadagopa, in fulfilment of the pledge to Yamuna's spirit, which we have mentioned before.

By the composition of the Sri Bhashya, he had redeemed another of the pledges. The third pledge was redeemed by Ramanuja naming a son of his friend Kuresa as Parasara, the name of the saintly father of Vyasa and the author of the Vishnupurana, which is held in great esteem. Kurukesa, otherwise named Pillan, composed a monumental, though brief, commentary called the Six thousand, on the 1,000 stanzas of the Tiruvai Mozhi, of St. Sadagopa. Parasara Bhattar, son of Kuresa, was a brilliant man, almost a prodigy and has composed various works, one of them being a commentary on the *Sahasranama* called *Bhagavad-guna Darpana.*

Troublous days were in store for Ramanuja. The Chola King (Kulothungachola I), persuaded by the bigoted Saivites of his Court, sent for Ramanuja to ask him for a subscription of his faith in Siva as the Supreme Lord. Kuresa, personating Ramanuja, accepted the summons, wore his master's red robes and went in his place, accompanied by the aged Mahapurna, Ramanuja's earliest teacher. The two reached the Court of the monarch (at Chidambaram in all probability,) and attempting to argue out the superiority of Vishnu, were commanded by the cruel monarch to have their eyes extracted. This was done and the unfortunate pair stumbled out somehow and started for Sri-

rangam. On the way Mahapurana died, unable to bear the pangs of pain, and Kuresa reached Srirangam alone. Finding the place closed to Vaishnavites, he repaired to Madura where he lived near the shrine of Tirumalirunjolai, a Vishnu temple of great sanctity.

Meanwhile Ramanuja with a sprinkling of his followers left Srirangam in fear of persecution and by hurried and nightly marches reached the outskirts of the Nilgiri hills. After great difficulties and many adventures, the party travelled across the forests, and reached Vahnipushkarini, a place on the Kaveri about 40 miles west of Mysore. Thence the party went east, halting at Mirle and Saligram, about 10 miles eastwards. Here Ramanuja spent some time converting a large number, and one Anthrapurna among the rest, who became a devoted follower thereafter. The party then reached Tonnur or Tondanur, where then resided the King Bitti Deva, of the Hoysala dynasty, whose capital was Dwara Samudra or the modern Halbeid. These events may be assigned to about the year 1088 or 1089 A. D., when Ramanuja was over 70 years old. The Rajah's daughter was possessed and the King and Queen were sore distressed on that account. A common acquaintance suggested Ramanuja as capable of exorcising the devil by the power of his austerities. Ramanuja was invited to the place and luckily succeeded in curing the Princess of her malady. The King and Queen were greatly pleased. Ramanuja, taking advantage of an affront which the Jain community to which the

King belonged had offered to the latter, converted him to Vaishnavism and changed his name to Vishnuvardhana.

A great disputation followed between the Jains and Ramanuja in which Ramanuja won a complete victory. It is said that Ramanuja, plied with the impatient questions of thousands of Jains on all sides, got inside a curtain, and assuming the form of a thousand-headed Adiseshа, answered each one, individually and so effectively, that the clamorous rabble fled away in terror. The story goes that the zealous convert King ground a large number of his quondam co-religionists in oil-mills, despoiled them of all their land-grants, erased their temples, and otherwise maltreated them. These statements of course must be taken with a considerable grain of salt, as it is very unlikely that any politic prince would have raised so unnecessarily such an opposition from his own people. Ramanuja established himself in Tonnur and had a large and beautiful lake constructed out of the waste materials of the despoiled Jaina shrines; the lake exists to this day and is called the *moti talab* or the lake of pearls.

Ramanuja's stay in Mysore extended over nearly twenty years. He succeeded in creating a strong and learned Vaishnavite community whose descendants exist to this day. He built the temple of Vishnu at Melukote or Tirunarayanapuram, a few miles north of Mysore, and established in it the God Narayana whose statue was discovered by him on the spot, from the revelations of a dream. He also recovered a copper

idol, Ramapriya, of the same God, which he learned, also from a dream, to be with a Mohammadan princess at Delhi and procured it, after an arduous journey to that place. The panchamas of the place were of great help to him in this business and he assigned them in gratitude certain limited rights of entry into the temple on fixed days, which privilege is enjoyed by them to this day. He then set up, with the help of his disciples, various other images at Belur and other places, and established a procedure for worship on a firm basis in all of them. He resumed his religious instruction as at Srirangam in peace and serenity, enjoying the favour of the ruler and the devotion of his old and new followers. He went to Padmagiri, (Sravana Belgola) the Buddhistic stronghold, and there obtained victories in argument over the Buddhists of the place and converted a large number.

Meanwhile news had reached him that the Chola King who persecuted him was no more, having fallen a victim to a serious carbuncle. He also heard of the misfortune of Kuresa and the death of his venerable teacher, Mahapurna. Sorely grieved, he longed to return to Srirangam, and console Kuresa and his numerous old followers. He, therefore, implored his Mysore friends to let him depart, which they did after getting an exact image of Ramanuja, which they set up for worship. He then started for Srirangam and reached it, travelling in rapid marches in the company of a large group of disciples. The people of Srirangam welcomed him with open hearts and conducted him to

his mutt in triumphal procession, The successor of Kulothunga I was a pro-Vaishnava ruler and Ramanuja was left undisturbed. Ramanuja met his affectionate follower Kuresa, now blind and decrepit, and shed tears of the deepest sorrow over his misfortunes.

Yet another journey awaited Ramanuja in his last days. Learning that the God Govindaraja, removed from Chidambaram under the orders of the late Chola ruler, was preserved in concealment at Tirupati, he journeyed to that place and established a shrine for that deity at the foot of the hills. He then returned to Srirangam and resumed his saintly life. After some more years of useful work, he closed his long and active career quietly at Srirangam, in the year 1137 A. D , having lived for 120 years, a span of life unusual among men, but which, we are assured from all accounts, was a historical fact in his case.

It must be added that his devoted follower Kuresa died a few years previously, deeply mourned by Ramanuja himself and by all around him.

That Ramanuja's was an exemplary character needs no demonstration. There are various incidents in his life (which space forbids us to mention) that bring out his broad-mindedness, burning sympathy for mankind, unselfishness to an extraordinary degree, resourcefulness and absolute devotion to God He went further than any other Vaidic teacher in recognising merit even though combined with socially inferior birth. He was an able interpreter of the human heart, and won men and women of different

temperaments to the path of religion by suitable sympathetic treatment. His writings show the keenness of his intellect, the vastness of his learning, and the sincerity and seriousness of his character. His moderation in controversy is remarkable. He has no harsh word anywhere for his opponents. His work on the practical side is truly epoch-making. His disciples were the ancestors of innumerable Vaishnava families throughout the Presidency who deem it their highest honour that they are so descended. That the Vishnu temples are places of large resort and centres of social and religious influence, is due entirely to his initiative and prudent fore-thought. Abuses creep into the best institutions and they can hardly be ascribed to the originators in any case. Ramanuja's religious activity bore fruit even outside the Presidency. In distant Bengal, a pupil of his was succeeded by the well-known Ramanand who preached Vaishnavaism and Bhakti, and has created many thousands professing the Vaishnava cult in Bengal and other parts of the North. Ramanuja, preceded and followed as he was by various reformers of eminence in his own line, is rightly held to be the founder of the Visishtadwaitic system, a brief description of which will now conclude this sketch of Ramanuja's Life.

II

Philosophy of Ramanujacharya.

THE TERM 'VISISHTADWAITA' EXPLAINED.

THE Visishtadwaita is so called because it inculcates the *adwaita* or oneness of God, with *visesha* or attributes. It is, therefore, 'qualified non-dualism.' God alone exists; all else that is seen is His manifestation, attribute, or *Sakti*. Such attributes are *chit* or the individual souls and *achit* or matter. The adwaitic position is also that God alone exists and all else is manifestation. Herein is the common element between the two views; but the Adwaitin regards the manifestation as unreal and temporary, and as a result of *Avidya* or Nescience. In consequence, the one Brahman is without any attribute, in his view. Ramanuja and his school regard the attributes as real, and permanent, but subject to the control of the one Brahman in all their modifications and evolutions. The oneness of God is compatible with the existence of attributes, as the latter are incapable of existing alone, and so do not constitute independent things. They are called the *prakaras* or the modes, *sesha* or the accessories, and *niyamya* or the controlled, of the one Brahman. The word Brahman is thus used either to denote the central unity, when it becomes possible to speak of the souls and matter, as its attri-

butes, or to denote the combined trinity when the whole universe may properly be described as consisting of Brahman and Brahman alone. The Visishtadwaitin does not make the unphilosophical statement that the souls are absolutely independent entities, endowed with the capacity of separate existence and activity, apart from Brahman

THE FUNDAMENTAL ATTRIBUTES.

The Brahman (we use the word in the first of the above senses) is Intelligence. It is something more—it is the Knower. Where attributes are denied, and all that exists is homogenous intelligence, as in the Adwaita, there can be no knower; for there is nothing to know. But for the Visishtadwaitin, Brahman is a knower, and the variety, philosophically essential for knowledge, is furnished by the attributes. Brahman is Bliss, i.e., he is blissful; for a mixture of the opposite, pain, is unimaginable in his case. It will thus be seen that besides the attributes of souls and matter, which may be called 'the concrete attributes' if such a phrase may be used, Brahman has various abstract attributes, qualities strictly so-called, denoting his perfection from various points of view. The Visishtadwaitin considers 'Intelligence' as partaking of the dual character of an abstract and a concrete attribute; and he instances 'light' as an example of the possibility of such an attribute. Intelligence is of the essence of Brahman; it is an attribute as well, in its nature of universal pervasion. Again Brahman is real, *satya*. By this is understood that he is without *vikara*

or modifications of any kind. The souls and matter are *asatya* or unreal, which again means that they are subject to modification, which is necessarily an element of impurity In the case of souls, this modification takes the form of expansion or contraction of Intelligence. In mineral, plant, or animal life, the soul, under *karmic* control, is dull or of suppressed Intelligence. The modifications of matter are of a more serious kind. In the creation and expansion of the universe, matter undergoes a real modification of its nature. Such change is called *parinama* or evolution as contrasted with *vivarta* or apparent variation, which is the view of the Adwaitin. The Visishtadwaitin holds that, in spite of the souls and matter being pervaded by Brahman, any modification of them, though under Brahman's control, do not touch His essence; just as the Adwaitin maintains that the operations of *Avidya* do not affect the one Reality The 'unreality' of the cosmos is thus another point of agreement between the Adwaitin and the Visishtadwaitin; but this, it must be admitted, is merely a nominal agreement, considering the important diversity in their conceptions of the unreality. The Visishtadwaitin would thus call Brahman, '*Sat*,' and the rest '*Asat*'; in a narrower sense, he reserves the epithet 'Asat' to Matter, which undergoes change in its essence, unlike the souls whose essence is like to the Brahman's and never changes.

TWO STATES OF BRAHMAN.

There are two states of existence for the Brahman. One is absolute quiescence or *pralaya*, when all the souls and matter exist in Him in deep sleep as it were. No differentiation is possible in that stage between the souls and matter; these are then, as it were, non-existent. '*Sat* alone exists, one without a second.' Existence is the only phrase that can be applied to the Brahman then, as volition, not to speak of creation, is potential or has not commenced to work. Then begins the second stage, creation. To the Adwaitin, creation is a negative, an unreal, act. It is the clouding of the pure Intelligence of Brahman by the inexplicable Avidya, which produces the manifestation of apparent diversity. The Visishtadwaitin considers creation as a positive volitional effort of the Brahman to display real diversity, by actualising the energy for change which is innate in both the souls and matter. *Sa Aikshata bahu syam prajayeya iti* 'He thought, may I become many, may I grow forth.' The *antah pravesa* 'entry within' which the Upanishads speak of as taking place at creation is not strictly true. To the Visishtadwaitin, it means only the Brahman's willing to develop his inseparable attributes, souls and matter; for Brahman was 'within' even before creation. To the Adwaitin, the *antah pravesa* is entirely metaphorical. The language of the *Parinama Vada* is used in his view merely for facility of comprehension.

THE PURPOSE OF CREATION.

The ethical justification for creation is Justice.

The fruits of actions (karma) have to be bestowed, equally and impartially, and Brahman does this by endowing souls with appropriate bodies of various kinds and giving room for further functioning and display of free-will within limits; the further evolution depends on the manner in which the individual uses his opportunities. As karma is, in the Hindu view, beginningless, it becomes unnecessary to account for its origin. To the objection that Brahman could have no purpose, being without wants, in engaging itself in creation, the reply is, in the words of the author of the Sutras, *lokavat tu lila kaivalyam* (II. 1.33), it is mere recreation, as in ordinary life. In other words, as no compulsion can be predicated of the Brahman to evolve the universe, the Visishtadwaitin accounts for it by the only other possible alternative, that it is mere recreation for the Brahman, but the strictest justice for the souls concerned. Sankara adds the explanation that His innate nature (*svabhava*) is to create, which does not carry us much further, and then reminds us that the whole discussion is unreal, as Brahman is never the agent of creation.

THE AUTHORITY OF REVELATION.

To the Visishtadwaitin, as to the Adwaitin, the Vedas and Smritis are the sole and independent authority for the knowledge of Brahman. Reason has no operation except in matters perceptible by the senses. Transcendental notions, as those with respect to the nature and attributes of Brahman and the souls, can only be got from Revelation. This position appears

illogical, dethroning, as it does, *Reason*, the accepted instrument of correct conclusion in all processes of thought. To explain this anomaly, we have to dwell a little on the exact place assigned to reason by Sankara as well as Ramanuja. Reason is an indefinite word. It depends for its correctness, on the intellectual capacity of the person arguing, the extent of his information and other circumstances. Until a fallacy is exposed, an argument is apparently sound. Then it is upset and the conclusion is to be reached by other reasonings. This want of finality in mere reason is referred to in the Sutras (II-1-11) and is the cause of the Vedantic systems rejecting it as a sufficient authority in the knowledge of Brahman as the Nyayikas did. The argument from design may at best establish a highly endowed intelligent first cause or causes, but could not lead to the conception of a perfect Brahman as first cause. And so, the help of mere reason as a sufficiently competent determining factor in the establishment of Brahman, as first cause, is rejected. This must not be taken to mean that the Hindu Vedantins reject argumentation in their philosophy. Every page of their writings is a standing monument of their skill in the subtlest reasonings. According to them the purpose of reasoning is two-fold. It has, in the first place, full scope in matters which do not transcend the senses. In the second place, it is a valuable adjunct in ontology, where the texts of the Vedas are to be construed. As it so happens that most important texts are liable to be dis-

puted as to their meanings, it goes without saying that there is full room for logical interpretation with respect to them. To say that explicit Vedic texts are unquestionable authorities means one of two things, either that we take them as the conclusions of great minds reached after acute reasoning, on matters which our feeble intellects could not sufficiently comprehend, or we consider them to be the records of unique direct experiences of men who had trained their powers of mental perception by methods to which we have no access. Neither position is inconceivable or necessarily absurd. So many scientific positions are accepted by the general body of educated men all over the world on the faith of representations that those positions have been verified by some one by actual experiments. There may be danger of mis-statements in either case; but those like Sankara and Ramanuja, who do not feel the position of an agnostic satisfactory or comfortable, have preferred to base their ontological position on revelation, while fully trusting to their capacity for ratiocination to meet objections on the part of those who do not subscribe to the authority of the Vedas. Between these two, there is, however, a difference. Sankara includes the Srutis and Smritis among ephemeral things whose purpose is served when once oneness is realised. Ramanuja considers them as always authoritative and as expressive of the eternal commands of the deity whose breath they are said to be. An important difference arises between these two thinkers, based on this distinction. In Sankara's

view the compulsory nature of ordained duties lasts only till an individual has realised by thinking his unity with God. Ramanuja considers the performance of such duties obligatory as long as life and physical power endure. (See Sutras III. 4 32-35.)

There are also certain assertions in Ramanuja's religious tenets which must be unacceptable to those who do not believe in revelation or adopt his interpretation Such are his eternally free souls (*nityas*), heaven conceived as a distinct place apart from and outside the changeable universe (though not outside Brahman), the existence of the Deity in physical forms of various kinds, the peculiar path of souls on their release from the body, and so on. Belief in these is based on express texts and no reasoning can be called to prove them It is Ramanuja's contention that reasoning is equally powerless to disprove them And a disapproval of these in no way affects Ramanuja's conclusions, as regards the nature of Brahman and its relation to souls and matter, as philosophical positions consonant to abstract reasoning.

MODE OF RECONCILIATION.

We now come to Ramanuja's mode of reconciling Vedic texts. Western scholars have tried to arrange chronologically the principal Upanishads and to discern, in some of them, partial truths; in others, crude statements; in others again, the completest insight into things transcendental that may be given to man. How far this discussion is convincing we shall not stop to examine. Where passages in the same Upanishads

appear to conflict, as in the *Chandogya*, the *Brihad-Aranyaka*, or the *Isa-Vasya*, it is evident that the ordinary rules of interpretation must be resorted to, to arrive at a consistent meaning. The respect which Hindus have entertained for the Upanishads on account of their antiquity has prevented them from considering any of them as of inferior authority to the rest. It follows that a consistent doctrine has to be attempted out of at least the principal Upanishads. This is what Sankara and Ramanuja have attempted to do, each in his own way. And this is indeed what Badarayana, the first interpreter of the Upanishads known to us, has himself done in the Sutras.

Professor Deusson and others have conjectured that Badarayana had a partiality for the Chandogya and hence the frequent reference to it in the topics discussed, Indian scholars thoroughly equipped with an intimate acquaintance with "the immense and highly technical philosophical literature, which is only just beginning to be studied and comprehended, in part, by European scholars," to use the words of Dr. Thibaut, have ascertained that, in the two Mimamsas, the passages discussed in each Adhikarana are only typical and not exhaustive and that the order of exposition is mainly based on logical sequence. It follows that there is justification for the view that one or two Upanishads are specially intended as the repository of philosophical truths to the exclusion of other Upanishads.

The texts of the Upanishads referring to the supreme Self are of two kinds. Some speak of Him as

nirguna, attributeless. Others describe him as having attributes or qualities like wisdom, power, etc. As truth can be only one, the natural question arises whether these texts can be reconciled in any manner. Sankara's view is that predominance must be given to the *nirguna* texts, as the others have the effect of limiting the Infinite, which should not be done. Hence texts like '*Ekam eva Adwaitiyam*,' one only, without a second,' *neha nana Asti*,' there is here no diversity, etc., are interpreted by him, without much straining, as establishing the absolute one-ness of the Brahman. And the other texts are relegated to an inferior portion and made to refer to an imaginary and inferior Brahman called *apara* or *karya* Brahman, i.e., the Brahman in conjunction with its creative power called *maya*. Ramanuja's difficulty seems to be that this sharp division of the passages into those referring to the higher and those referring to the lower Brahman is not easily and directly inferable from the texts themselves. On the other hand, the passages are so mixed up that it is impossible to say that this distinction, if true, was ever prominently kept up. His reconciliation is, therefore, as follows: the texts of the Upanishads do not inculcate an attributeless Brahman; the attributes are real and not the result of Avidya; the texts referring to these attributes expound the Brahman as He is, with the souls and matter as His inseparable modes. Brahman is one, only in His compound nature, as described already. The texts denying any attributes for Him are to be taken as meaning that He

has no low or inauspicious attributes, such as liability to changes, death, sorrow, etc. The texts as to creation, as mentioned already, mean a real modification of the attributes, souls and matter of the Brahman and do not mean that Brahman becomes suffused with Nescience and imagines a variety. The souls are many and God is immanent, both in them and in matter. The texts which speak of unity and deny variety do so of the totality of the Brahman with his attributes. Texts, which deny a second to Brahman, mean that there is no other controlling power in the universe apart from Him. Texts which deny the possibility of knowing Brahman, do not mean that he cannot be the object of thought, as there is no thinker; they mean only that His wonderful and priceless excellences or qualities could not be adequately described. Else, according to Ramanuja, they would conflict with hosts of passages which prescribe knowledge of Brahman and ascribe qualities to Him. The text of the Brihad Aranyaka II. 3. 6 which contains the famous words "*neti neti*," "not so, not so" and is taken by Sankara to teach the negation of all attributes, is interpreted by Ramanuja (Sutras. III. 22. 1) as merely denying the possibility of adequate knowledge of the Brahman. "This interpretation," says he, "is confirmed by the fact that after the negative phrase come an epithet of Brahman as 'the True of the True, for the Pranas are the True'." Ramanuja interprets this text to mean that the Pranas or the individual souls are *satya* or 'true' i.e., not subject to

change in their essence, while the supreme Self is altogether real or unchangeable. "He is, therefore, more eminently true than they (the souls) are."

THE THEORY OF CAUSATION.

The theory of causation has profoundly exercised the minds of all Hindu philosophers; the Vedantins, like the Sankhyas, maintain the oneness of cause and effect in essence, as opposed to the logicians who maintain that they are different. In what sense, then, is the world which is an effect, one with its cause? Badarayana has a topic discussing this point. (Sutras, I [illegible] 23, etc.) Here he maintains that the Brahman is not merely the instrumental cause, but also the material cause of the universe. He is, in the position, not merely of the potter but also of the mud, to give an illustration familiar to Indian philosophers. A succeeding Sutra, (I 4 27) refers to the way in which Brahman as the cause becomes the effect. It is by '*parinama*' or owing to modification. In Ramanuja's view the oneness of cause and effect arises from the fact that the cause is the Brahman in the *sukshma* or subtle state, when the souls and matter are undeveloped and the effect is Brahman also, now comprised of the Supreme Self and the souls and matter, the latter in a fully developed state. Sankara, practically admitting the interpretation of the Sutras given above, would, however, explain the modification as '*Vivarta*' really *i.e.*, phenomenal creation by Brahman as influenced by Avidya or Maya. That the two philosophers are entirely at variance in their view of this oneness is also clear

from their respective commentaries on the important Sutra II-1-14 (14, in Sankara's numbering) a discussion of which would be out of place in this brief exposition. We would only draw attention to an important and suggestive statement of Sankaracharya, at the close of his commentary of the above Sutra, that Badarayana, in his view, omits to contradict the reality of the manifested world and adopts the language of the *Parinâma Vada*, for the purpose of facilitating the exposition of the saguna meditations later on in the work.

THE DOCTRINE OF NESCIENCE.

Ramanuja's Sribhashya is remarkable for the lengthy disquisition on various topics by which his actual commentary on the Sutras is preceded. In this disquisition, he treats of various controversial points and expounds fully his differences of views from those of Sankara. One of the most important of these is his statement of objections to the theory of Maya or Avidya, which is a fundamental one in Sankara's philosophy and is, at the same time, the most vulnerable point in it. Is this Avidya different from or identical with Brahman? The former view would seem to undermine Sankara's doctrine of oneness and the latter is equally untenable. Sankara cuts the Gordian knot, by boldly declaring that it (the Avidya) is *Sadasadanirvachaniya*, *i.e.*, it is indescribable as either existing or non-existing. Ramanuja expounds at great length his difficulties as to the tenability of the Maya theory, under seven heads, a clear account of which is to be

found in Professor Ranghacharya's 'Analytical outline' prefixed to his valuable translation of the Sri Bashya, Vol. I. Ramanuja's objections are of this wise: The Avidya cannot operate on the Brahman, directly, for His nature is Intelligence and this would repel Nescience by its intrinsic merit. Nor can it operate on the individual souls, for these are the outcome of the action of Avidya and cannot, therefore, be acted upon in anticipation. Again, to state that Nescience clouds the Brahman is impossible, for that would mean that Brahman's luminous nature is thereby destroyed, a position which is not admissible. Avidya, again, as defined by Sankara, is in Ramanuja's view, inconceivable, as the simultaneous possession of two opposite characters as existence and non-existence, cannot be predicated of anything in human conception. Ramanuja, further, does not think that to describe Avidya as 'indescribable' really strengthens the position of Sankara, for if a thing is absolutely indescribable, it must be non-existent as an entity. Then Ramanuja points out that such an Avidya cannot be proved to exist by any known means of proof including Vedic or Smriti texts; if such an Avidya should exist, it is irremovable says Ramanuja, for the knowledge of attributeless Brahman required to remove it, is according to him an impossible thing, such a Brahman not being provable. Lastly, such an Avidya is irremovable for another reason. In Ramanuja's view the ignorance, being the result of Karma can be removed only by enjoined action and meditation. Mere knowledge of Brahman cannot

remove it. For all these reasons, Ramanuja concludes that the theory of Maya is untenable and opposed to the tenor of the Vedic texts.

CONCLUSION.

It is not the purpose of this sketch to explain all Ramanuja's objections to Sankaracharya's views. What has been attempted is only the setting forth of Ramanuja's views on important points with just so much reference to the doctrines of Sankara, as is necessary to understand Ramanuja. To really grasp the vital differences between these two eminent philosophers, and to arrive at a proper estimate of their relative merits, would mean a thorough discussion of three important questions, namely, (1) who is the better interpreter of the Upanishads, (2) who has more accurately represented the views of the Vedanta Sutras, and (3) who is entitled to greater respect as a philosophical thinker. These are questions of so difficult a nature that they are entirely beyond our scope and capacity. Enough has, however, been said to show that Ramanuja, when he becomes better known, would most certainly be deemed entitled to a high place among the world's philosophers and his system, though not possessing the simplicity or universality of Sankaracharya's, is yet an eminently sound one, compatible with an admission of the reality of the cosmos and a high conception of the nature and attributes of the Deity.

Sri Vedanta Desika.

THE spread of Vaishnavism in South India after the days of Ramanuja cannot be adequately dealt with in the short space of an article or two. The literature that has come down to us since Ramanuja's days, and which, though not available largely to the general Sanskrit-knowing public, is gradually seeing the light of day in important publications here and there. On the practical side the characteristics of the sect, distinguishing it from the rest of the people, became accentuated in course of time, and an amount of exclusiveness and one-sidedness became the symbol of the class, which cannot but be deplored in its own interests. The spread of Saivism by the advocacy of erudite Sanskrit scholars was a simultaneous feature of these days which has to be taken into account in estimating the cause of this exclusiveness. We have also to mention that a schism of an important nature arose among the followers of Ramanuja in Southern India, a couple of centuries after Ramanuja's death which has only more fully developed itself as days have gone by, and has not contributed, as may be expected, either to enhance the true religious or moral progress of the community as a whole, or to secure the increased respect of the communities around towards the dogmas and practices of the Vaishnavas as a class. It is only

necessary to add that we are confining ourselves here to the spread of Vaishnavism in South India, leaving it to a future article to give some account of the prominent features of Vaishnavism as it has developed in Northern India.

The legitimate successor of Ramanuja in his character as head of the Vaishnavite community is said to be Kurukesa, a disciple of Ramanuja, referred to already as the author of a commentary on the Tiruvoymozhi. Another of his pupils, Pranatartihara of the Atreya Gotra, was a beloved nephew of Ramanuja himself, and a great scholar. He had the sole charge of the preparation of Ramanuja's daily food, a function which, as Ramanuja was a sanyasin, could not be discharged by any one indiscriminately. In course of time this Pranatartihara had a great-grandson Ramanuja or Appuliar by name. Varada Vishnu Acharya was another of Ramanuja's pupils whose grandson Varadacharya became a learned scholar. The latter studied under one Vishnuchitta, a Solia Brahmin, pupil of Kurukesa, and the author of a learned commentary on the Vishnupurana, the well known work of Parasara, besides other works. Vishnuchitta lived about the early part of the thirteenth century A.D., a fact accidentally corroborated by a statement of his in his Vishnupurana commentary* that at the time of his composition the forty-fourth century of the Kaliyuga was progressing. Under Varadacharya whose work

* P 169, L. 14. Madras Telugu Edition of the Vishnupurana with two commentaries.

Tatwasara is now extant, and who was popularly known as Nadadur Ammal, studied the Atreya Ramanuja already mentioned. Many other eminent men studied under him, one of whom may be specially named here. This was Sudarsana Bhatta, a great-grandson of Kuresa, Ramanuja's disciple and friend. This scholar composed various works that have come down to us: the *Srutaprakasika*, a commentary on the Sri Bhashya, modestly named a 'transcript' of his master's notes, but of considerable learning and polemic ability, a commentary on the Upanishads, another on the *Vedartha Sangraha* of Ramanuja, a commentary on the Sri Bhagavata called *Sukapakshiya** and many others.

One day, in the lecture-hall of Varadacharya, Atreya Ramanuja made his appearance accompanied by a young and attractive boy, whom he introduced as his nephew. This was the future Vedanta Desika,† then about five years of age, if the story is to be believed. The boy was called Venkatanatha, and gave even at that time, evidence of his precocity by reciting, in answer to a doubt, the passage last touched upon in the lecture which had temporarily stopped on the advent of the boy. Varadacharya is said to have been

* Our authority for this statement is Manavalamahamunigal, scholar and saint, a very reliable authority in the matter of references: see page 110 of his commentary on the Tatwatraya of Pillai Lokacharya, Tamil Edition.

† Vedanta Desika or (Vedantacharya) lit. Teacher of Vedanta, though originally a title, has practically become by general use the proper name of this scholar, and hence is frequently used in this article instead of Venkatanatha, his real name.

impressed by his powers of retention and intelligence, and to have blessed him in a neat and prophetic Sanskrit verse.* The boy as he grew up was duly instructed by his uncle in all the usual learning of the Vaishnava scholars. He early impressed his contemporaries with his greatness, and a belief grew up, based on the dreams of his parents, that he was an avatar of the God of Tirupati, and that his birth was inspired by the Deity sending out his *Ghanta* or bell for the purpose. This belief was rife even during the life of Venkatanatha, as we see a reference to it in his allegorical drama, the *Sankalpa Suryoda*,† to be subsequently mentioned.

Venkatanatha, it may be mentioned, was born at Tuppul, a suburb of Conjeevaram about the month of September in the year 1268 A. D. His father was Ananthasuri, and his mother Totaramma, sister of Atreya Ramanuja mentioned already. The boy is said to have been born after a visit of the parents to Tirupati and to have therefore been called by the name of the God of that place. Duly instructed by Ramanuja his uncle, the young man became very learned and exemplary in his conduct and was looked upon as the coming leader of the Vaishnava community. After spending some years at Kanchi, his

* वरप्रेक्ष्यते बुधजनैरुपपत्तिभूम्ना ।
घंटा हरेः समजनिष्ट यदात्मनेति ॥

† प्रतिष्ठापितवेदान्तः प्रतिक्षिप्तबहिर्मतः ।
भूयास्त्रैविद्यमान्यस्त्वं भूरिकल्याणभाजनम् ॥

native place, Venkatanatha travelled south and took up his residence at Tiruvahindrapuram, near Cuddalore, for some years. His great ability in composition and disputation acquired for him the title of *Kavi Tarkika simha*, lion of poets and logicians. His skill in all arts and handicrafts obtained for him the title of *Sarvatantra Swatantra* or expert in all arts, and later on, the title of *Vedantacharya* or Vedanta Desika was bestowed on him in admiration of his wonderful ability and powers of exposition in the Vedanta. To this day, the site of his house at Tiruvahindrapuram is pointed out as evidence of his stay there, and an old, but well-preserved well still exists which he is said to have built *with his own hands* to satisfy an importunate artisan who objected to his title of universal expert! Vedanta Desika composed many works at Tiruvahindrapuram, chiefly *stotras* or hymns of praise on the Deities of the place. One of them is *Achyutta Sataka* in Prakrit, in a highly difficult style, whose affinity with the spoken dialects of the time remains to be investigated. A Tamil work of his the *Paramata Bhanga* is an able and exhaustive review of all known philosophies and systems, about 16 in number, somewhat on the plan of Madhavacharya's *Sarvadarsana Sangraha*, but not, like that work, a mere statement of the doctrines, but a condensed and learned refutation of the tenets of every system other than the Visishtadwaita. It is practically a summary in Tamil of the vast learning contained in the author's Sanskrit works and is useful to those who are

not special students of the latter. The *Gopalavimsati* is a popular Sanskrit hymn of 20 stanzas, in perhaps the sweetest language that this learned writer ever employed, on Sri Krishna and his early exploits.

Venkatanatha now returned to Kanchi and spent his time there in instruction and composition. With his usual facility, he composed various hymns on the Deities of that place, the most important of which is the *Varadaraja Panchasat*, on the God at Kanchi, which is a work of considerable merit. Every stanza, as may be expected, bears the impress of his vast learning and deep piety. He also compored here *Nyasadasaka*, a short work on *Prapatti*, the doctrine of surrender, which Vedanta Desika elaborated in numerous later works. He further composed various works in Tamil verse and prose, embodying in easy language the substance of his teachings for the edification of those devoid of Sanskrit learning.

Vedanta Desika now started on his inevitable northern tour. He first visited Tirupati, where he composed and dedicated to the God the work called *Dayasataka*, a hundred and odd stanzas, in long and resounding metres of various kinds, rather harsh in style and obscure in the expression of thought, a combination frequently pervading his more elaborate works, especially of the earlier period.

From Tirupati, Vedanta Desika proceeded northwards and travelled, we are told, through the site of Vijianagar. Vidyaranya, the sanyasin and future Prime Minister of the Vijianagar Kings, had not yet

begun his political career The two met, we are told, and great scholars as both of them were, though of different schools, must have appreciated each other very fully From Vijianagar, Desika proceeded north to Muttra and Brindavan, and returning, came to Benares passing through Ayodhya on his way. From Benares he turned south-east and followed the usual route of the pilgrims to the eastern coast at Puri or Purushotamam Thence he turned south, via Sri Kurmam, Ahobilam and Tirupati, and reached Kanchi duly, after a prolonged tour of some years. While at Kanchi, we are told, the great Vidyaranya, now a Minister of influence at Vijianagar, sent a message to Vedanta Desika who was reputedly poor, that he could introduce him to royal patronage, if so desired. The reply of Vedanta Desika was short and complete. He cared not for riches or for the favour of kings. His aims and ideals were quite otherwise. The reply was in the form of 5 stanzas, now preserved, which breathe his independence and utter callousness to the charms of wealth. Even if the fact of the message is not historical, we have evidence that Vidyaranya was acquainted with the other's works, as certain verses of Vedanta Desika extracted in Madhava's Sarvadarsana Sangraha* conclusively show Vijianagar was founded about 1335 and Vedanta Desika may be taken to have been in his fifties during the period of his tour

Vedanta Desika had now a call from Srirangam where the leading scholar, Sudarsana, above mentioned,

* pp. 51 and 53 of the Calcutta Edition of Jibananda.

was getting old, and the doctrines of Vaishnavism badly wanted a defender, learned and powerful. Desika gladly complied, and proceeding to Srirangam rich with the holiest associations as the scene of the labours of Ramanuja and his predecessors, took up his residence there. He now entered upon a vigorous career of instruction and further composition, and produced a number of scholarly and philosophical works, expounding the Visishtadwaita doctrines and combating the views of other schools. He is said to have expounded the Sri Bhashya 30 times and on the 28th occasion of his lectures, composed a work called *Tatwatika*, a lengthy commentary on the Sri Bhashya, a part of which only is now available. He also wrote the *Tatparya Chandrika*, a simple and extensive commentary on the Gita Bhashya. Three controversial works were next composed, namely *Satadushani*, *Tatwamukta Kalapa*, and *Nyaya Siddhanjana*. The first is a work of a hundred objections to the Adwaitic views; the second contains, in over 500 verses of flowing metre, a development of the doctrines of the Visishtadwaitic system with refutations of the views of others, while the third is a text book of general philosophy in prose from the Visishtadwaitic point of view.

Vedanta Desika also composed two other important works, one of them the *Seswara mimamsa*, being a direct commentary on the Sutras of Jaimini, where the author tries to show that Jaimini accepted the existence of the Deity, which he is generally supposed not to have done; and the other, the *Adhi-*

karana-saravali, a series of Sanskrit verses in long metre summarising the discussions on the various topics of the Vedanta Sutras. The language of this latter work is simple and clear and shows the great facility which the author possessed in metrical composition on philosophical subjects. The last philosophical work which the author composed is a Tamil Text-book on the Visishtadwaita system and especially its doctrine of *Prapatti*, named the *Rahasyatrayasara*.

It must be mentioned that Vedanta Desika whose works exceed a hundred in number and are in Sanskrit and Tamil on a variety of topics from Geography to *Shilpa*, or the practical arts, was a poet of no mean order. He has composed a long and interesting poem, *Yadavabhyudaya*, in 24 cantos, on the life of Sri Krishna, *Sankalpasuryodaya*, an allegorical drama in 10 Acts where Love and Hate and Discrimination, and Ignorance are the *dramatis personae*, a small poem, called *Hamsa sandesa*, in imitation of Kalidasa's 'Meghaduta,' but sufficiently original in conception and delineation, a curious poetical work in very simple language on the sandals of God, *Paduka-Sahasra* by name, and a didactic work of 144 stanzas in his most difficult style, called the *Subhashitanivi*

All the above works and a number of others in Sanskrit and Tamil were composed by him during his residence at Srirangam where he spent many years of life. His learning and piety, his absolute unselfishness and meekness of character ensured the love of his followers and the respect even of those who differed

from his views. His early years were perhaps characterised by an aggressive confidence in his own views and a certain distinct vigour in the expression of them. In later days, he became meek and kind to all and avoided disputations where he could not hope to convince. He created enemies, no doubt, among those Vaishnavaites, who followed other teachers and found differences in the views expounded by him. Such people tried to harass him in various ways. Vedanta Desika however received their insults with meekness and subservience, and tried to unarm hatred and jealousy as far as he could. We have reason to state that the schism in views among the followers of Ramanuja referred to before, commenced about this time and that the teachers, who advocated other views from those of Vedanta Desika, differed from him chiefly in their views of the nature and condition of *Prapatti* or the secret doctrine of surrender to God. Pillai Lokacharya and Peria Achan Pillai were the leading exponents of these views and they have composed works of great learning and ability, mostly in Sanskritised Tamil, indicating fully their views. A pupil in the second generation of the former of these was the great Manavala Mahamuni, a sanyasin of extreme South India, who is the recognised head of the Tengalai sect of the Ramanujiyas, as Sri Vedanta Desika is of the Vadagalai sect. Various differences in practice and doctrines cropped up between these sects, which have become sharper as time passed, and now divides the community into two factions between whom reconciliation seems to be out

of the question. We believe however that, even in the days of Manavala Mahamuni, the split was yet a narrow one and we are glad to note that Mànavala Mahamuni himself appreciated Vedanta Desika's merits as he quotes him more than once with approval and usually describes him by the appellation of '*abhiyukta*' which means a respected and reliable author of one's own school. The doctrinal differences between the schools are trivial and are not much appreciated; but we must suppose that the innate love of parading differences is a characteristic of degeneracy in all systems founded on the soundest bases and Vaishnavism has not escaped the general fate of religious doctrines dogmatically carried to excessive detail. It is only a matter of melancholy satisfaction that few practical religions have preserved themselves unsullied by unseemly disputes and schisms as time advances and the inspiration of the original founder ceases to be felt.

We now propose to give some account of our author's allegorical drama, *Sankalpa Suryodaya*, mentioned already. Passion-plays and mystery plays are well-known in Europe, but seem to be confined to the incidents in the life of Jesus Christ. In Sanskrit literature there are but three principal works* which are dramas of this allegorical nature as far as we know. One of them and possibly the earliest of them is the *Prabodha Chandrodaya*, 'The rise of the moon of knowledge,' by Krishnamisra, who is stated to have lived about the

* *Chaitanya Chandrodaya*, of Karnapura, in addition to the two we are now mentioning.

end of the eleventh century.* Of this work, Professor Macdonell says† that it is "one of the most remarkable products of Indian literature. Though an allegorical play of theologico-philosophical import in which only abstract notions and symbolical figures act as persons, it is full of dramatic power and vigour. It aims at glorifying orthodox Brahmanism in the Vaishnava sense just as the allegorical plays of the Spanish poet Calderon were intended to exalt the Catholic faith." The learned scholar's opinion that Prabodha Chandrodaya is a Vaishnava play is accurate, as the express purpose of the play is to exalt the Adwaita faith which cannot be usually identified with Vaishnavism. The play is, however, of moderate proportions in fairly simple style, and the lightness of touch and the humour displayed in exhibiting the practical contrasts among the followers of various tenets show the great dramatic power of the author in fitting for the stage a drama on an abstract subject. The Sankalpa Suryodaya or 'The Rise of the Sun of Divine Will' of Vedanta Desika is a work on the same lines and with a similar purpose, to do for the Vaishtadwaita what Krishnamisra had done for the Adwaita. Vedanta Desika's purpose is to exhibit dramatically the toils and troubles of the human soul before it obtains an insight into Divine Truth, the difficulties in its path of progress to liberation created by passions like Love and Hate, the saving power of Divine grace at every step of this progress,

* His alleged personal interview with Vedanta Desika must, if this date is correct, be only a myth.

† *Vide* page 250, Vol. II, Imperial Gazetteer, Indian Empire.

and the final triumph of the soul over its enemies. The author writes in a serious style, except in some Acts where there is room for humour, and the language is sublime and generally neither harsh nor obscure. The play is rather long and some portions could well have been curtailed, but Sanskrit dramatists, except perhaps Kalidasa, do not do justice to the sense of proportion, and even Bhavabhuti is a sinner in this respect. It has, however, been acted in India and the plot is so contrived that there is enough of action. The reader's, if not the audience's, interest is kept up by sufficient variety of sentiments, though the dominating sentiment is maintained by the author to be *Santi Rasa* or Quietism. The hero is King *Viveka* or Discrimination, and his Queen is *Sumati* or Wisdom. In their purpose to free the *Purusha* or Soul from the bondage of Karma, these are opposed by the whole set of passions of which *Mahamoha* or Deep Ignorance is the head. The latter is supported by *Kama* (Love), *Krodha*, (Anger), *Darpa* (Pride), *Dambha* (Vanity), and so on. In Act I, after the prologue, Kama and his followers are introduced and some of the finest verses of our author describe his vauntings and threats against the Purusha. Then Viveka enters, and gives, in reply to the questions of his wife, a statement of purposes and procedure in liberating Purusha. In Act II, the author depicts a controversy on the stage in which the spiritual adviser of Viveka and a pupil of his, intended to present *Sri* Ramanuja and our author respectively, discuss the situation and are confronted

with opponents of various schools whom they dispose of by argumentations easily enough. In Acts III and IV, the characters Attachment, Hate, Jealousy, etc., are introduced and their activity among men is detailed. In Act V, Pride surveys the world 'from China to Peru' and finds no spot on earth where he is not in favour. We have here many humorous passages-at-arms between Pride, Vanity and Deceit, and the poet has succeeded in giving a realistic touch to these abstract notions by the fecundity of his imagination and the felicity of the situations introduced. Much satirical power is displayed in these Acts in exposing the abuses of various classes of society in Northern and Southern India, and the poet must have 'laughed in his sleeves' when he made Darpa (Pride) rebuke Dambha (Vanity) thus.—" You fool, I simply abstain from kicking you on the head, out of respect for your Brahminhood. Know you not that the great Tondaimandala is my native country and the famous suburb of Little Kanchi is my place of residence. The head of my family is (daily) adored by King *Skanda* and I am famous for the number of my *Sishyas* (pupils or followers) all over the world. You despicable, old frog-in-the-well,* you alone are ignorant of my powers of irresistible argument and have probably neither seen nor heard of Me." It may be surmised that the 'Skanda Bhupala' of this passage refers to some lingering Pallava Chief who continued to live in Kanchi, after the Pallava power had been

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* A well-known Indian epithet applied to an ignorant stay-at-home boor, unaware of the outside world and its news.

crushed by the Cholas; for 'Skandavarman' is a frequent name in the dynastic list of that family. In another place, our author makes Dambha (Vanity) say that he visited the precincts of the residence of Brahma in the Satyaloka, when the Great Creator rushed out of his palace to receive him, and, after washing duly his own hands seven times to remove all possible impurity, procured himself the *arghya* water, as a mark of deep respect. The reference to the frequent washing of the hands is a satiric touch that will come home to most people acquainted with Vaishnavas, who have carried ceremonial purity to the length of a science. The Act ends with a humorous description of the noon-day sun in words that compare him to a glutton flying from one pleasure to another and are appropriately put in the mouth of a follower of Mahamoha, the counterfoil to King Viveka.

In Act VI, is described an aerial voyage of King Viveka and his charioteer 'Reason' when all India is surveyed and places of interest to the Vaishnavite pilgrim are depicted. The object of the party was to seek out a quiet place for *samadhi* or meditation, and the perfectly sane conclusion is reached that, after all, surroundings are secondary, and the real seat of contemplation is one's own heart, wherever one may live, the seat of one's moral and religious sense and the abode of the Supreme Self. In Act VII, Viveka strives to fix the wandering thoughts of his charge, the Purusha, on some definite form of the Deity, to help concentration and secure victory over his enemies.

Act VIII, describes a stage-warfare between the party of Viveka and the opposite party, and concludes with the final victory of the former. The Purusha now undisturbed by conflict enters on meditation (Act IX) and finally, with the help of Vishnu-Bhakti or devotion to Vishnu surrenders himself to God and obtains final liberation (Act X). Thus King Viveka accomplishes fully the purpose that he set before himself. The Author concludes in the happiest style of his later days with a prayer that the Great Vasudeva may accept his work as He is the real author of the play and the Audience for the same.

To return to Vedanta Desika; after years of simple and retired life spent in instructing his followers, and occasional tours to sacred shrines, Vedanta Desika closed his career about 1369 A.D., having lived the full life of a hundred years and a little more, with vigour and activity. He left a son, Varadacharya by name, who became a great teacher and was the author of various works, and a sanyasin disciple, Brahma Tantra Swatantra Jiyar, who became an equally famous man and is considered to be the founder of the Parakala Mutt at Mysore. Vedanta Desika's further descendants are not known to fame, but this able writer and teacher lives in his works and is further worshipped in images in all the principal Vishnu shrines of South India, with an assiduity which will perhaps bear greater fruit if used in the study of his voluminous and edifying works.

An event, of great importance to South India

politically, occurred during Vedanta Desika's life, which we have purposely refrained from referring to till now, and which requires a brief mention, before we conclude. About 1310 A.D., Malik Kafur, a General of the Delhi Emperor Alaudin, undertook an invasion into the Dekkan with a large army. He speedily reduced the kingdoms of Warrangal and Dwarasamudra, and pushed south up to the extremity of the Peninsula, spreading devastation, and plundering everywhere. In 1312 or according to some accounts, 1326 A.D., an army of Muhammadans invaded Srirangam and pillaged the temple and city The Vaishnavas of the city anticipated this, however, and removed the copper image of the Deity to Madura, just in time to save it from spoliation. The conquering army massacred a large number (12,000, according to one account) of Vaishnavas, and left the place in ruins. The inner shrine of the temple had however been blocked up from view, and so, it is said, escaped destruction. From this time for a period of nearly forty years, the districts of Trichinopoly and Madura, were under the rule of Muhammadan Deputies, subject to the Delhi Emperor. About 1351 A.D., the Vijianagar King Bukka I, having established a stable Hindu kingdom on the banks of the Tungabhadra, commenced to conquer the southern portions of the country recently occupied by Muhammadan Generals. He succeeded through Kampanna Odayar, his son and General, in conquering the greater part of the southern country and bringing it under Vijianagar rule. Kampanna, who

established himself at Madura, was greatly assisted, in his wars by one Gopannarya, a Brahmin and a warrior. Gopanna was the Governor of Gingee, in North Arcot, which had fallen into the hands of the Vijianagar Dynasty. We have stated above that about 1326 A.D., the idol of the Srirangam God had to be taken out to Madura to escape the fury of the Muhammadan invaders. The God was gradually taken to Tirupati and worshipped duly there. When Kampanna completed his conquests in the south, Gopanna, who was no doubt a devout Vaishnavite, thought it a suitable opportunity to restore the idol to Srirangam. He brought it out from Tirupati and kept it at Gingee for a time. He then took it to Srirangam and restored it to its proper place in the shrine and directed the usual festival (which had ceased) to be commenced in connection with the idol. This fact is recorded in an inscription on the eastern wall of the temple in the form of two Sanskrit slokas,* of nearly identical meaning and the verses are preceded by the chronogram "*Bandhupriya Sakabde*" which means "In the Saka year 1293," i.e., A.D., 1371. A tamil work Kovilolugu is responsible for the details of the account, and the same is also mentioned, without dates, in the Tamil Vadagali Guruparampara, as it is called, a work of about the end of the fifteenth century, which we have largely utilised in our articles. Vedanta Desika, it would seem, escaped the general massacre, being hidden by a mass of dead bodies, and betook himself with his

* *Vide Epigraphica Indica*, Vol. VI, p. 330.

followers to Mysore. He spent several years there and then went to Satyamangalam in Coimbatore. Here, in sore grief at his separation from the precincts of Srirangam, he composed the hymn *Abhiti-Stava* or 'the hymn to expel danger.' He makes reference in this work to the invasion of Muhammadans and to the cessation of worship at Srirangam, and lamenting over this great grief of his in his old age when "his head has become fully grey," prays to God to expel his enemies and return to his seat. In due time he heard, we are told, of the conquests of Gopanna and the return of the God, and himself hurried to Srirangam to enjoy the happy turn of the tide in favour of the Hindus. It is said that the first of the verses inscribed on the wall was composed by him. The Guruparampara above mentioned further narrates that Desika lived some years after this event, built or repaired the Chidambaram Govindaraja Temple with the help of Gopanarya referred to already, and, composed the Rahasyatrayasara mentioned already, and certain other works, and finally died in the *Kartikai* month of the year *Soumya* which corresponds to November, 1369, A.D. The correctness of the last date is vouched for by other accounts, also of a traditional nature, and could not be disputed.

It will be seen that in the above account the date of Saka year 1293 or 1371 A. D., for the actual restoration of the idol to Srirangam does not fit in, for if Desika died in 1369, he could not compose the verse of the inscription in 1371. This is a discrepancy which

has to be got over. Dr Hultzsch in the "Epigraphica Indica" (Vol vi, p. 323) points out another difficulty. It is that if Vedanta Desika lived in 1371, he could not have been born in 1269, in the Sukla year as stated in the Guruparampara; for according to him a life of 100 years and more is a great improbability and the date of birth must therefore, he says, be 'a pure invention.' This is perhaps a small matter We have reason to think that the age of 100 years and upwards is not necessarily false, as exceptional people in those times, as well as now, lived long Their spare diet, pure habits and high intellectuality seem to have prolonged their lives, as otherwise many reliable accounts, some of them almost contemporary, have to be treated as spurious. But even supposing that Vedanta Desika was born a couple of decades later, there is a great agreement in all accounts that he lived only up to 1369 A. D, and hence, he could not have lived to see the restoration if it really took place in 1371 Therefore, we may conclude that the story of his authorship of the verse is apocryphal and must be rejected. But there is a difficulty. If the restoration of the God was in the time of Varadachariar, Vedanta Desika's son, there was no special motive, as far as we could see, in anticipating it, as the account does not in any way connect Desika with the actual achievement of the restoration, except perhaps to show that his prayer had immediate effect. We would therefore suggest that the actual restoration of the idol was some years before the death of Vedanta Desika in 1369 A.D., say

about 1364 or 1365. There is nothing improbable in this, as Kampanna's activities by way of conquest commenced in 1361-62, (p. 325 vi. Epigraphica Indica) and he is said to have made some repairs at Srirangam, so that the inscription may have been engraved on the wall on the date mentioned, the actual restoration and consecration having occurred a few years before. The inscription barely recording two verses of identical meaning with a date in chronogram prefixed to them, does not look as if it was put up under the superintendence of Gopanna or of the authorities of the temple for the purpose of celebrating the restoration. We miss the full commencement, usual in inscriptions, expressing the cyclic year, month, and day of the event, intended to be recorded; and the purposeless repetition of the same facts in two successive verses, seems to justify the conclusion that memorial verses already in existence were simply engraved in an unauthorised manner with the date of engraving prefixed by the sculptor. No doubt, it may be said that the Kovilolugu account goes into great detail and gives the same date, Saka 1293. We reply that that narrative is simply a late reproduction of the apparent purport of the inscriptions and that it is inaccurate in at least two particulars, one being the *date* of the invasion where it errs by about 100 years as pointed out in the foot-note, and the other, that Saka 1293, whether taken as current or expired, cannot correspond, under any circumstances, to the 17th *Vikasi* (Solar) of the year *Paritapi*, as stated in the Kovilolugu and in some

later account evidently based upon it. We have Professor Kielhorn's authority that the 2nd *tithi* of the bright half of the month Chaitra of the year Paritapi corresponded to the 7th March 1372 A.D., and was in Saka samvat 1294 expired.* Hence it is impossible to rely on the year Paritapi or even the previous year, Virodhikrit, which would correspond to Saka 1293 expired, as the date of the actual return of the idol to Srirangam. It should also be noted that, according to the verses, the victory over the *Turushkas* was after the bringing of the God to Gingee, which might have taken place any time after 1361 A.D., when Kampanna's activities in the south seem to have commenced or even before that date. We are, therefore, probably nearer the truth in conjecturing that Desika returned to Srirangam soon after the restoration of the idol, in about 1364 or 1365 A.D., and lived a few more years only, i.e., till November 1369 or the year Soumya, the year of his death as preserved in the Guru Parampara Prabhava, the work of the third Brahma Tantra Jiyar, probably not much later than the end of the fifteenth century.

In confirmation of an earlier date than 1371 herein suggested for the actual restoration of the idol to Srirangam, we would also refer to the '*Yatindrapravana Vaibhavam*' of Pillai Lokarya Jiyar, Madras Edition, 1907, at p. 25 where the events stated above are also narrated and the Verse I of the inscription is quoted as composed by an '*Abhiyukta*' evidently re-

* See No. 15 of the list of inscriptions at p. 336 of E.I. Vol. vi

ferring to Vedanta Desika. The writer then states that the restoration was in the Saka year *Bahupriya*, which is a chronogram for 1283 Saka or 1361, A.D. If this is the correct reading and not *Bandhupriya* as the inscription has it, the date of the composition of this Verse and that of the restoration must be that year, rather than the later years 1364 or 1365, as suggested in the preceding paragraphs. As Chronograms, besides serving their purpose, were usually made to mean something appropriate, 'Bahupriya', 'beloved of the many' would be a more suitable name for the year in which such an important event took place than '*Bandhu priya*' 'loved by relations.' The tradition as to the year being 'Paritapi' is however repeated in this work also, a year which does not fit in with any suggested Saka year, as we have explained already, but was about the date of Malik Kafur's invasion, which may have been the cause of the confusion.

Manavala Maha Muni.

AMONG the younger contemporaries of Ramanuja Charya, mention has been made already of Parasara Bhatta, son of Kuresa, as a learned scholar and author. Born about 1074 A.D., Parasara had an exceedingly bright scholastic career, and was duly initiated in the sacred lore, by Ramanuja's cousin and pupil, Govinda. After Ramanuja's death, he became a vigorous defender of the Faith and engaged in many successful controversies. In one of these, it is said, he sought out an eminent scholar of the 'Western country' or the modern Mysore, who was a reputed Advaitic and was, in fact, known by the name of Vedanti. It would seem that Vedanti was a rich man and usually fed hundreds of Brahmins every day. Parasara went in amongst the crowd dressed like a common man; but on reaching the inside of the house where the feast was held, approached Vedanti who was present there, and asked him to grant him the 'bhiksha' or alms of disputation. The scholar could not resist and so commenced, we are told, a controversy, for ten days, in which Parasara became the victor. He then converted Vedanti to his faith, and the latter became an important disciple. Some years after, Vedanti deserted his native country, and going to Srirangam with all that remained of his wealth, bestowed it on Parasara, and

became a sanyasin under the name of '*Nanjiyar*,' 'our sanyasin,' bestowed upon him by Parasara.

The family of the Bhattars is well-known for its Sanskrit scholarship and copious contribution to the religious and philosophical literature of the day. Kuresa, the founder, has himself composed five *stotras*, on the Deities of various shrines, which are well-known for their erudition and power of expression. Two of these the *Vaikuntha Stava* and the *Atimanusha Stava*, are especially very readable and are justly favourites with Vaishnavite scholars. Parasara Bhatta has also contributed two hymns to the *stotra* literature, one on Goddess Lakshmi, who is a personality with the Vaishnavas, second only to Narayana himself, and the other on the God of Srirangam, whom Parasara looked upon almost as his father in flesh and blood. The poems are, however, rugged and not easily understandable, but the former of the hymns, the *Sriguna Ratna Kosa*, contains several stanzas of good poetry in sublime language. Among other works of this writer may be mentioned the *Tatvaratnakara* on philosophy, now partically extinct but largely quoted from by Sri Vedanta Desika, and the commentary on the Vishnu Sahasra Nama, already mentioned. Nanjiyar also composed some works, in Tamil it is to be presumed, one of which seems to have been named the *Tatwadipana*. He is better known as the author of a commentary—the 'Nine-thousands' on the Tiruvoymozhi, so-called as the quantity of syllables in the work is computed to be Nine-thousand *Granthas*, a grantha being equivalent

to 32 syllables or an *anushtubh* verse. It has become usual to adopt this mode of computation in Sanskrit and Tamil works even when they are in prose, on the analogy of the Mahabharata, the Ramayana, and the Puranas, whose *grantha* computations are carefully preserved in the Colophons.

It is now proper to mention that, during this period, the study of the last named work of St. Satagopa received considerable attention from the Vaishnava scholars of the day. Specialisation was adopted and while one set of scholars continued to expound and comment upon the Sribhashya and the allied Sanskrit works, another set took to the study of the Tamil works of the Alwars, which gave them full employment. These Tamil hymns, not being argumentative treatises but merely the devotional songs of various pious men of all castes and creeds (one of them was a Pariah), poured fourth out of love and deep faith, and being couched in language which is often ancient and abstruse, lent themselves to ample comments; and the Vaishnava scholars, many of whom were good Sanskritists as well, lost no time in writing learned commentaries on the different portions of them.

Nanjiyar was succeeded by a disciple *Kalivairi* or *Nampillai*, who taught the Tamil hymns largely and composed a commentary on a small portion out of them. A disciple of Nampillai, Vadakku-Tiru-Vedhi-Pillai by name, is the author of an extensive commentary known as the 'Thirty-six-Thousand.' This work is an inexhaustible storehouse of traditions on the differ-

ent interpretations of the text and gives us a good idea of the amount of industry and learning that was brought to bear on the study of these Tamil works. Periavachchan Pillai was another of Nampillai's pupils who wrote full commentaries, on the Tiruvoymozhi and the other hymns as well and was a most prolific and well-informed writer of the day. As is inevitable, differences of views arose on points of construction as well as on details of doctrine between the above set of writers who came to be called the Southern School or the Tengalais and the writers of the Northern School, generally known as the Vadagalais, who, though more largely patronising Sanskrit works, had still an equal regard for the Tamil hymns and expounded them in their lectures. Vedanta Desika himself, as representing the latter class, was, as we have seen, an able Tamil scholar and author and is said to have composed a commentary on the Tiruvoymozhi, which is not now extant. But various authors after his date have written such commentaries and at least 5 exist now, which are studied by various sections of the orthodox Vadagalai class.

To the next generation of writers belonged Pillai Loka Charya, son of the author of the 'Thirty-six-Thousand' commentary, but a pupil of Nampillai and author of various works in Sanscritised Tamil, the most important of these are the *Sri Vachana Bhushana* and the *Tatwa Traya*. These works are in terse and elliptic style and were evidently meant as summaries in pithy language of doctrines which were expounded orally at great length. Pillay Loka Charya

was an elderly contemporary of Sri Vedanta Desika; and the latter, in his works, especially, the *Rahasyatraya Sara*, alludes in various places to his views and purports to controvert them. The *Tatwatraya* is an exposition of the principles of the Visistadwaita philosophy and its view of the development of the universe and the inter-relationship of the souls and God. The other work, the *Vachana Bhushana*, is held in extraordinary veneration by the followers of this school, as a repository of secret and esoteric doctrines, incapable of being understood except under the direct teaching of a duly qualified preceptor. The chief features of the book are the doctrine of surrender to one's *Acharya* or Guru, advocated by this writer as a sufficient means of salvation, the emphasis given to the doctrine of Grace by the assertion that even the sins of men are agreeable to God, and the somewhat unceremonious rejection of caste-superiority as a ground for respect among men otherwise equally venerable as lovers of God. It will be perceived that the last is a feature which must ensure the adherence of non-Brahmin Vaishnavites generally, who form a majority among those of the Southern School. The excessive adoration of the Guru, as yet theoretical in Southern India, has become, as we shall see, a permanent feature of Northern Vaishnavaism as developed by Ramanand and his followers, who also, from the necessities of their position, threw all caste distinctions to the winds, and drew followers from every class and creed.

The next writer of note in this school of Vaishna-

was was the well-known Manavala Maha Muni, whose name has been appropriated for the heading of this paper. He was born near Alwar-Tirunagari about 1370 A. D., and is said to have lived for 73 years, *i.e.*, up to 1443 A. D. Of well-built proportions and extremely fair, almost white, in appearance, he soon attracted attention by his intelligence and ability and came to be recognised as an eminent scholar. He was a pupil of one Sri Sailesa or *Tiruvoymozhi Pillai*, a teacher of the Tamil hymns, as the name implies. He spent his early years at Tirunagari and then moved to Srirangam, the holy city of so many eminent divines. Here he permanently established himself and acquired a large following of pupils and admirers. His life's work was partly composition and instruction, and partly the systematic organization of his followers under various centres or Sees, the acquiring of control over temple management and ritual in various places, and the repair of shrines in various districts out of funds collected from the richer of his followers or paid voluntarily by devotees.

Among other works, Manavala has composed commentaries on the two works of Pillai Loka Charya mentioned already. His commentaries are characterised by great clearness and fulness of exposition. He possesses the great merit, found in few other Hindu writers of giving references to the quotations spread throughout important Tamil works like the 'Thirty-six Thousands' commentary, and always quotes the sources of

the texts that he himself extracts. His range of studies must have been large and he was an eminent scholar in Sanskrit and Tamil. His original works are, however, few; in fact only three or four are known to posterity. One of them is the *Yatirajavimsati* or twenty verses in Sanskrit in praise of Sri Ramanuja, and is in simple style. We find here the curious introduction of initial rhyme in many of the stanzas; that is to say, the second syllables of the four lines of each verse are identical, a feature universal in Tamil prosody but unknown to Sanskrit readers; though final rhyme, as in English poetry, is occasionally met with in Sanskrit.* The other works, the *Upadesaratnamala* and the *Arthiprabandha* are in Tamil verse. The former is a list of the names of Alwars and chief teachers wit some account of their works. The latter is a passionate appeal to Sri Ramanuja in heaven, to end his days and liberate him from the physical ills which seem to have worried him late in life, and the torment of worldly existence which every Hindu is expected to detest. Manavala Maha Muni had a son Ramanuja who seems to have died before him and a grandson Jiyar Nayinar, who survived him. He had numerous disciples, some of them sanyasins like himself. One of the lay pupils was one Prativvadibhayamkara, who, as his name implies was a scholar of some eminence. Two of his works now exist; one, a commentary on the *Ashta Sloki* of

* See its use, with great effect, in the Ramayana, Sundara Kanda, Cantos V and VII, and in the poem '*Nalodaya*' attributed to Kalidasa, where the last two syllables of each of four lines are identical.

Parasara Bhatta, and the other a vigorous laudatory poem of 70 verses on Sri Vedanta Desika. We have clear indications in this later work of the growing dissensions between the adherents of the two schools. The author of the 70 verses asserts his indebtedness to the teachings of Vedanta Desika and his son Varadacharya (1317 to 1414 A. D.), and states that he is a pupil of the latter. It is understood however that he later became an adherent of Manavala Maha Muni. The chief disciples of Manavala, of whom the first was Vanamamalai Jeer, the founder of the Mutt of that name in the Tinnevelly district, are known by the name of 'Ashta Diggajas' or '*the eight elephants*, guarding the eight quarters' in evident allusion to the strong support which they gave to their chief in the promulgation of his doctrines.

There are various points in theory and practices in which the two schools, which are now known as the Vadagalais and Tengalais, differ; one such is the well-known distinction in the vertical caste-mark as worn in the forehead, the Vadagalais using a parabolic form, the base of which is nearly in a line with the brows, the other class using two somewhat broad straight marks slanting in opposite directions, outwards, and supported on a base which is itself a small triangle, base upwards with the vertex lower down, about the apex or in some cases the centre, of the nose. The central red streak is common to both, and is meant to represent Lakshmi. But the chief item of controversy between these two schools, which has engaged

the attention of Magistrates and Judges, is the claim of either sect to officiate exclusively in the temple rituals and worship, to the accompaniment of certain recitations commencing with what has come to be known as the *patrams*. The recitation of the Tamil songs of the Alwars has been connected with temple ritual from the time of Ramanuja, and possibly from earlier times also. The *patram* is however, for each community, a single stanza in *anushtubh-metre*, which sets forth the name of its leading Teacher, and is peculiar to him. The one used by the Vadagalai community commences with the words '*Ramanuja-daya-patram*,' meaning 'recipient of the kindness (*i.e.* teachings) of Ramanuja,' the Ramanuja referred to here being the Atreya Ramanuja, uncle of Vedanta Desika and his immediate teacher. The other verse is on the same plan but has for its first words *Sriesaiesa*, the teacher of Manavala and refers to the latter as his pupil. There is nothing in the verse of either party to wound the susceptibilities of the followers of the other; but of course the right of commencement is fought out eagerly, as it is the prelude to the exercise of other rights in the temple and neither party is willing to use or listen to the recital of the other's verse, as it may imply an allegiance which it stoutly refuses to grant. The English educated community of either sect and those among the others who have no chances of participating in temple emoluments have no relish for such unseemly disputes, and regard them as deplorable. It is to be hoped that, as education increases and the

spirit of national life develops, the two sects may learn greater toleration and manage to live in peace, studying the works of their teachers, instead of getting them up parrot-like, and engaging in free-fights on such trivial matters as the *paivams*.

Sree Chaitanya.

THE development of Vaishnavaism has now been traced, though only in the form of sketches of the lives of the principal exponents, from the earliest times to about the middle of the Fifteenth Century. In South India it is clear that from the early years of the Christian era, this cult flourished under the strong impetus given by the Alwars, who by their Tamil songs, inculcated Bhakti and Krishna-worship mainly. ' The Alwars were saints or *Bhaktas* of various castes, who were unique in their devotion to God, and led lives remarkable for their religious fervour and difference to worldly pleasures. Three early Alwars named respectively the *Poykai Alwar*, the *Bhutathalwar*, and the *Peyalwar* were mythical in their origin and are said to have met at the modern Tirukkoilur, where they had a vision of God and poured forth their joy at the sight, in Tamil verses of a hundred each. These Alwars speak of Narayana as the highest God, allude frequently to the early Avatars of Vishnu especially the Tiruvikrama or the Vamana and are eloquent in their admiration of the Krishna-Avatar. They presuppose the chief Puranas and are anterior to all the rest of the Alwars. They adore the idols of the more ancient shrines of South India, like those at Srirangam, Tirupati, Alagarkoil, etc. They speak with respect of Vedic lore, but teach the

worship of the Deity by recitations of His names, services at the temples and contemplation of his personal forms. *Tirumalisai Alwar* was the next in order of time and he has composed about 200 stanzas. Of the later Alwar, Saint Satagopa or *Nammalwar* has been mentioned already more than once in these pages. Of the rest Vishnuchitta or *Perialwar*, *Kulasekaralwar*, who was a ruler of ancient Travancore, and *Tirumangai Alwar* are the most noted and have composed extensive songs. The list of Alwars included a lady, *Andal*, daughter of Vishnuchitta; a pariah devotee, *Tiruppanalwar*, who has composed but 10 stanzas, and a pupil of Nammalwar, *Madhurakavi* who was a worshipper of his Guru, exclusively. We find nowhere among these Alwars any denunciation of Brahmins as such or protests against the caste system; they represent in no sense any rise of the lower castes against the Brahmin Priesthood and the frequent denunciations of Budhists and Jains show who their contemporaries were. It seems reasonable to conclude that these Alwars or the earlier of them were the offshoots of the Northern Bhagavatas or Vaishnavites and that they devoted their lives to pious worship of the personal forms of God, and visits to the shrines of Vishnu. The Bhagavad-Gita was well known to them and the Bhagavata in some form also, for their works are saturated with Sri Krishna's early life and its miraculous incidents.

The Acharyas from Nathamuni downwards form the next phase of development in the Vaishnava faith,

and represent the intellectual, as the Alwars do the emotional side. A construction of Philosophy which was fit to be placed before the best intellect of the land and which at the same time gave room for the absorption of the teachings of the Alwars and the doctrine of Bhakti, was the chief feature of this work. Caste was firmly supported, all heresy was eschewed and the Shastras were fully upheld by these Acharyas, while at the same time purity of life, superiority of devotion, and fervid adoration of Narayana in his Avatars and idol manifestations were also inculcated. Ramanuja represents the climax of these teachings and in him we have the philosopher and the devotee happily combined. The philosophy is healthy and sympathetic, the devotion has not degenerated to fanaticism or irrational worship. The doctrine of *Prapatti* or Surrender was inculcated to suit inferior intellects. Ramanuja in no place countenances the slightest departure from strict Shastraic injunction. He is uncompromising in denying the privilege of Vedic study to Sudras and women and the latter were never permitted to mix with men in devotion or abandon their usual household duties much less to assume the character of nuns. *Bhajanas*, *Sankirtans*, festive songs, etc., were practically unheard of in those days and religious fervour never took the form of violent demonstrations or indecent exhibitions.

In the centuries following that in which Ramanuja lived, i.e., the twelfth and the two succeeding centuries these features of Vaishnavaism were greatly preserved.

Non-Brahmin adherents no doubt increased in number but we hear nowhere of the protests against the caste restriction and the assertion of general equality which is a permanent feature of modern Vaishnavaism as seen in the North. It must be admitted however that the germs of these doctrines began to be visible about the beginning of the Fifteenth Century in the preachings of certain of the Vaishnavaite teachers in Southern India. We have alluded in the life of Manavala Maha Muni to the emphasis given to the spiritual equality of the Brahmin and the Sudra *Bhakta* and the assertion of the doctrine that the Guru was the ultimate Saviour. A curious mode of expressing the difference of views in the operation of God's grace was this: some asserted that divine grace acted *like the monkey*, i.e., the souls must exert themselves to get saved, as the young of the monkey actively seizes its mother during the latter's evolutions from tree to tree. Others more indolent or more hopeful according as one may view it, asserted that God's grace was *like the cat*, which safeguarded its young, unaided by any efforts of the latter God's graces according to this latter school, was irresistible and required nothing but an attitude of receptivity to freely flow to the deepest sinner. Hence the maxim, "fatal to many Hindu sects" as Barth points out, 'that the acts of the true devotee, of the Bhakta, are indifferent, and that the man who has once experienced the effects of Grace, whatever he may do, can sin no longer.' Such doctrines, carried to their logical conclusions, dangerously minimise responsibility and beget a

familiarity with sin, and an audacious disregard of purity in life.

Another doctrine equally fatal to progress was the Guru-worship or deification of the immediate preceptor. With regard to the founders of the various systems, there may be some justification for ascribing to them divine origin and powers. But the deification of every later Guru, however theoretically disciplinary it may be, to the pupil, is largely destructive of rational thought and the spirit of self-reliance, and encourages superstitious veneration for persons who may have lost all claim for respect.

It is to the above causes that we must ascribe the degeneration of Vaishnavaism in Northern India, in later days. In the South, doctrines like those mentioned above found little practical support and never led to the levelling of the castes or the adoption of questionable habits. The grip of the Shastra and established social rules, was too strong to be shaken by the Brahmin Vaishnavites, and the Sudra followers were generally inferior in importance and never asserted themselves. Any show of equality by the higher castes was valued as a privilege and the respect for the Brahmin as Brahmin, born in the flesh from Manu's days, was never forgotten. The comparative political quiet of the South also contributed to preserve the higher castes from disruption or admixture with the lower But in the North, Vaishnavaism first affected the lower strata of society and proceeded upwards in its conversions. In Bengal, Saktaism had

taken deep root among the Brahmins who practised their horrible mystic rites in secret and excluded the lower castes. In Benares and Western India, the Brahmins were generally enlightened advaitees to whom the cult of devotion and faith had no attractions. Hence the first converts to Vaishnavaism were there also the lower castes. It was therefore inevitable that the habits and customs of the converts should react on the religion newly adopted and present phases of it which are alike strange and inexplicable to the earlier adherents of the same faith in the South.

It is perhaps not quite true that all the Vaishnavaism found in the North was imported from the South after Ramanuja's days. The land of Krishna's birth, overrun as it was by frequent devastating armies, was still a place of resort to vast crowds as a holy centre. And the Krishna cult that had taken such a deep root there in the early centuries of the Christian era, was not altogether without power during the intervening centuries. But any how its potency was slumbering and before it shone forth again, it had to be fanned anew by a fresh breeze of Vaishnavaism from the Southern lands, where it was thriving, thanks to the Alwars and Acharyas who had sedulously fostered it.

The chief Vaishnavites of Northern India are the Ramanandis, the Vallabacharis, and the Chaitanyas. Ramanand, the founder of the first of these sects, is said to have been the fifth in apostolic succession from Ramanuja and to have lived in the end of the four-

teenth century. There is nothing improbable in the story usually given that Ramanand, insulted by Vaishnavites of the South among whom he lived, for his social inferiority, travelled north and established a Mutt at Benares and had numerous followers. He advocated the doctrine of Bhakti of course, asserted the supreme efficacy of the *Rama* mantra, and discarded social distinctions. It may be mentioned that Rama-worship as distinguished from that of Krishna is unknown in the South, and it is therefore incorrect to say, as some writers do, that Ramanuja inculcated Rama-worship. A pupil of Ramanand or one of his successors, Nabhaji by name, wrote the *Bhaktamala* or the lives of saints which is practically the scripture of the Ramanandis. The famous Tulsidas (1532—1623 A.D.) seventh in descent from Ramanand, "one of the greatest reformers and one of the greatest poets that India has produced," in the opinion of Dr. Grierson, is the author of the Hindi Ramayana, which is a text-book of religious philosophy for millions in Upper India. The pupils of Ramanand are from various lower castes. One of them was a Muhammadan weaver named Kabir and he founded a system whose object was to amalgamate Hindus and Muhammadans. Rama was the god of worship; but forms and *mantras* were excluded. When Kabir died his corpse was claimed by both sects and the remains, miraculously converted to flowers, were shared by Hindus and Muhammadans. Nanak carried out the same purpose of reconciliation of Hindus and Muhammadans in the Punjab and gave rise

to the *Sikh* clans, literally *eshyas.* Sikhism has been described as Muhammadanism minus circumcision and cow-killing and *plus* faith in the divinity of the Gurus. It is said that Sikkism is now on the wane and is being absorbed into some form of Hinduism. The *Adi Granth*, the Bible of the Sikhs, contains Hindu doctrines and is worshipped as a *divinity* by itself.

The other two sects of Vaishnavaism and their innumerable sub-sects are all founded on the worship of Krishna. In the Vallabha religion, *Balagopala*, the child Krishna gorgeously dressed, is the object of worship. The Bhagavata is the foundation of the Krishna Leela or the early exploits of Krishna. Krishna is worshipped along with or in conjunction with the Gopis; but *Radha*, the unmarried consort of Krishna, is not usually associated with him.

Vallabhacharya, the founder of this sect or at least its most famous exponent, was born about 1749 A. D., in Telingana and settled at Muttra to teach his doctrines. The worship of Krishna and the indulgence in the rhapsodies of the Bhagavata and the Gita Govinda tended to increase luxury and licentiousness in the Maharajahs or High Priests of this sect and its followers. The worst forms of sexual love and immorality became tolerated and commended as religious. Many of the immoralities of this rich and highly influential sect were exposed in a case which went up to the Supreme Court of Bombay in 1862.

The Chaitanyas who now remain to be described are most general in Bengal. They are now branched

into various sects, some of them made up of the richer and the higher classes while the majority seem to be of the lowest classes, containing the worst dregs of the population. The special feature of this sect was the adoption of *Radha Krishna*, as the object of worship. Jayadeva's *Gita-Govinda* mentioned already gives a good idea of the influence which the erotic sentiment commenced to exercise on Hindus even so early as the 12th Century. The most commendable attitude of the soul to God was represented by the position of the beloved to her lover. Married love was considered of a lower form, being interested; the love towards the gallant, subversive of worldly duty and propriety as it was, was considered the highest kind of sentiment that the soul can entertain towards the Almighty. Radha-worship was inculcated by Chaitanya in the beginning of the 16th Century. But there is reason to think that this kind of worship is as ancient as the beginning of the Christian era, if not earlier. Krishna's amours had been spiritualised from the earliest times. The ardent longing of the Gopis for Krishna was considered typical of the souls' longing for God, and sages and poets who cannot be suspected of favouring moral lapses have agreed to regard the Krishna Idylls as symbolic of the highest spiritual devotion that is possible to man. Many of Nammalwar's hymns and those of other saints in the Tamil land typify this phase of devotion, and other religions have adopted the ideal of female love as typical of adoration due to the Most High. However this may be, the chief popularity of the Radha cult arose,

of course, from the full play it gave to the amorous side of human nature. In the earlier stages and in the case of those adherents who were morally strong, there is no doubt it led to no excess or abuse. But human nature of the yielding type which it generally is, can hardly resist long the insinuations to moral fall which such excessive hankerings are bound to produce, and it is therefore no wonder that the Radha Krishna devotion, and the promiscuous mingling of the sexes which it permitted, have degraded to a pitiful degree vast crowds of Chaitanya Vaishnavites whose ignorance and superstition give them no chance of reformation. Many of the Chaitanya sects adopted the reprehensible practices of the Tantrics or Saktas and hence fell into those very sins which moved the moral wrath of Chaitanya and prompted his attempts at reform

It was in the city of Navadwip or Nuddea on the Ganges that the boy Nimai or Visvambhara, the future Chaitanya, was born about 1485 A D. His father Jagannath Misra was a high-caste Brahmin and an immigrant into Nuddea from Sylhet. He married Sachee, daughter of Nilambar, a learned man of Nuddea. Nuddea was then, as it has been ever since, the home of the Nyaya philosophy; and Pundit Sarvabhauma was teaching subtle syllogisms there during the early years of Visvambhara's life. Visvarupa, the elder brother of Visvambhara was Sarvabhauma's pupil While yet a boy, Visvarupa suddenly left home and resolved to become an ascetic. He wandered over many places, finally settled at Pandharpur in Western India, and seems to

have died there. There are however some mysterious hints in Chaitanya's lives, that Visvarupa was identical with the ascetic friend and constant companion, Nityananda of Chaitanya. But the better opinion seems to be that the two are different.

Visvambhara's early life was frolicsome, mischievous, and worrying to his parents in a high degree. He became a spoilt child and freely indulged in his whims, one of which was frequent weeping and dancing. About the ninth year he was invested with the sacred thread, and he then went to attend the *tole* of Gangadas, a pandit of the place There he studied Grammar, and, it is said, acquired great proficiency in it. He then attended the Nyaya College of Sarvabhauma, where he came in contact with several advanced pupils who, later, became his companions. One of these was Raghunath, the author of the commentary *Didhiti* on the *Chintamani*, the modern text-book of Nyaya. We are assured by the author of 'Lord Gauranga,' that Visvambhar himself wrote such a subtle work on logic, that it excited the fear and wonder of Raghunath and that the former thereupon tore it to pieces to please Raghunath who was ambitious to be unrivalled. It is perhaps likely that Visvambhara did not obtain any great proficiency under Sarvabhauma, if he read under him at all It is certain that Sarvabhauma, whom Visvambhara met some years after, did not recognise in him, a former pupil of any eminence. He simply recognised Chaitanya as the son of his former friend and companion, Jagannatha. Then

Visvambhara started a grammar school of his own at the early age of sixteen and attracted followers and pupils. He was now married to one Lakshmi, daughter of a Vallabhacharya, but the lady died 2 or 3 years after marriage. He then married again Vishnupriya, a girl of great gentleness of character and devotion to Chaitanya.

Visvambhara was now about 20 years of age. He had been initiated into the Vaishnavite faith by one Isvarapuri, a pious devotee. He now undertook a trip to Gaya, the holy place. The sight of Vishnu's footprints there produced a wonderful change in his sensitive nature. He lost himself in frequent thought and yearned deeply for a sight of Sri Krishna. Here he again met Iswarapuri and the contact of the ascetic made him long for Krishna the more. He was taken back by his friends to Nuddea and tried to commence his school work. But this was found impossible and he had to give it up entirely. He found himself constantly talking of Sri Krishna and the Gopis, the Brindavan and its attractions; and the impossibility of life under normal conditions became apparent. He became subject to trances and visions, and, more than once, seemed to have attained to the presence of Krishna. The friends and followers of Sri Chaitanya who have recorded the details of his life in various works in Sanskrit and Bengali, feel no doubt whatever that in these days Visvambhara's body was subjected to a spiritual pervasion by Sri Krishna himself. During these moments when

the Lord came upon him, he was not Visvambhara at all. In his ordinary moods he danced and sang and was delirious with *Bhakti* or devotion. He imagined himself to be Radha and acted her part to perfection. But when he was overpowered by Krishna's *Avesa*, he knew not what he did. He was a medium and the followers perceived only Sri Krishna and his miraculous doings. Thus on one occasion he entered the puja house of an elderly friend *Srivas*, a wealthy householder, and taking his seat on the *dais* reserved for the idols, called out in tones of command that "He had come," and wanted *Abishekam* or the sacred bath. He was duly bathed, dressed and worshipped. All around fell at his feet and were rewarded with gracious replies. The *seance* lasted several hours and then Nimai fell down in a swoon. When he awoke he was dumbfounded at the situation and recollected nothing. At another time his friend Nityananda beheld his beauteous form, expanded into large proportions, with six hands, two of which bore the bow and arrows like Rama, and two others were playing on the flute like Krishna, while the remaining two held the staff and the waterpot, typical of his future sanyasin's state. It may be added that the typical figure of Chaitanya or Gouranga in the numerous places where he is worshipped, is the six-headed figure, the body representing on the right Sri Krishna and the left Radha. Nityananda is devoutly believed to be Balarama himself, elder brother of Sri Krishna, whose avatar was Visvambhara himself.

A most important follower acquired in these days

by the future Chaitanya was Adwaitacharya, an elderly Vaishnavite pundit and scholar. He had frequent opportunities of seeing Visvambhara in his trances and had vision of him as Sri Krishna. His cultivated mind, however doubted, and it was reserved to Visvambhara in one of his moods, to proceed to his village Santipur, some miles down the Ganges, from Nuddea, and *literally* beat the truth of his divine nature into the head of Adwaita. The holy man, it is said, took the chastisement as a most pleasurable exercise and was duly and thoroughly cured of his lingering scepticism! Another miracle which Gauranga achieved was the conversion of the brothers, Jagannath and Madhava, two notorious sinners, who had great influence in Nuddea and whom Gouranga openly humbled. It is said that he took upon himself their hideous sins and saved them completely. Gouranga brought about a dramatic representation at the residence of one Chandrasekhar, a relative of his, in which Adwaita played the part of Sri Krishna, Gouranga himself that of Radha and Sri Vas, that of Narada. The subject of the play was the meeting of Radha and Krishna in the Brindavan and the characters were Krishna, and his friends and Gopees. In this representation, we are told the various characters represented, entered spiritually the bodies of the respective actors and the play was really a grim reality, in which Krishna's early life was [illegible]acted.

A most important change in Visvambhar's life now occurred. This was nothing less than his renunciation

of worldly life and initiation as sanyasin under the name of Sri Krishna Chaitanya, his future designation. The initiation was by one Kesava Bharati, an ascetic who lived at a village some 18 miles from Nuddea and to whom Nimai went up in great secrecy, having given the slip to his friends and family. His friends and relations however traced him but were unable to impede his progress to sanyasinhood. Chaitanya himself considered his ordination as the *summum bonum* of his life and an inexpressible joy and Krishna-madness seized him at once. For three days he wandered about thinking to reach Brindavan and spend his remaining life there. Some of his friends followed him with difficulty and brought him back to Nuddea. To the great grief of his mother, life at Nuddea was considered objectionable and it was arranged that Chaitanya should settle at Puri or Jagannath, a place not too far off and sufficiently sacred to satisfy his spiritual cravings.

To Jagannath, then, he went, accompained by a few trusted followers. Jagannath was in the dominions of Pratapa Rudra, King of Orissa, a Hindu Monarch of great power, who ruled from 1504—1532, A.D. and whose capital was Cuttack. The King's favourite Pundit and Principal of the Sanskrit College at Puri was the great logician, Sarvabhauma under whom, it has been mentioned, Chaitanya himself had read for a short time. Sarvabhauma was all in all with the temple authorities, and through his help, Gouranga and his friends had access to the innermost shrine. Chaitanya feasted his eyes on the holy image and lost himself in

ecstasy. Gopinath Acharya, a brother-in-law of Sarvabhauma, was well aware of Chaitanya's greatness and divine indications and was of much use to him. In due time the great scholar Sarvabhauma himself was converted by Chaitanya and became an humble follower.

The author of "Lord Gouranga" says that there was a great Shastraic disputation between the two, and Chaitanya was completely victorious. The *Chaitanya-chandrodaya*, of Karnapura, son of Sivananda, a contemporary of Gouranga, does not mention the disputation but narrates that the conversion was the miraculous effect of God Jagannadha's 'Holy 'Prasad or food-offering, which Chaitanya took to Sarvabhauma one morning and imperiously compelled him to swallow. Any how a complete conversion of Sarvabhauma to the doctrine of faith in Krishna was the result. King Pratapa Deva's conversion duly followed and Chaitanya, who was now more obviously an avatar than he had ever been before, and whose spiritual power had become irresistible, established himself at Puri and propagated his faith throughout the length and breadth of Orissa and Bengal.

Two other events in the life of Chaitanya were of great importance in extending his influence. One was his trip to South India, when he is said to have visited Vijiangar and converted one Ramanand Roy, a Brahmin official of some importance under Krishnadeva Raya. This Southern tour seems to have been a rapid but extensive one and many miracles are related in connection with it. The other event we would refer to was

the visit of Chaitanya to Benares and his victory over Prakasananda, an advaita sanyasin of great scholarship who subsequently became a follower of Chaitanya under the name of Probodhananda.

After staying some dozen years at Puri, Chaitanya seems to have travelled again to Nuddea and thence to Benares and Brindavan. He made proper arrangements for the teaching of his doctrine of *Krishna-Prem* or love to Krishna. Adwaita and Nityanand were stationed to work in Bengal. Rupa and Sanatana, two other pupils, were sent to Muttra. He himself lived a strict life of religious fervour and constant devotion and finally disappeared about 1527, having converted many millions of people to the Krishna faith in Bengal and Orissa, the chief scenes of his activity.

Whatever may be the truth about Chaitanya's Divinity, it is clear that he was, in actual life, the Sri Krishna for the Sixteenth Century. Writing in 1872, Hunter, in his *Orissa*, says:—

> The adoration of Chaitanya has become a sort of family-worship throughout Orissa. In Puri, there is a temple specially dedicated to his name and many little shrines are scattered over the country. But he is generally adored in connection with Vishnu and of such joint temples there are at present 300 in the town of Puri and 500 in the districts......At this moment Chaitanya is the apostle of the common people in Orissa. The death of this reformer marks the spiritual decline of Vishnu-worship.

Chaitanya who, as Barth calls him, was perhaps all but 'a poor enthusiastic visionary,' had a few converts from Mahomedanism among his followers. It does not appear, however, that he ever preached any Mahomedan doctrine or tried to assimilate, like Kabir or Nanak, the two essentially different religions, Hin-

duism and Mahommedanism. *Within* the pale of Hinduism, he recognised apparently no caste distinction. He seems to have preached a mild and unobjectionable form of Krishna-worship and his personal character was attractive and highly lovable. We have absolutely no reason to suppose that, by his mode of worship, he countenanced or would have countenanced the disgraceful excesses which now characterise the lower orders among his followers, and a reckless ambition to spite his rivals and persecutors at Nuddea, by developing a counter-cult to Saktaism, does not, as has been supposed, appear to be a natural part of his character as disclosed in the extant accounts of his life. Chaitanya is said to have built many shrines at Brindavan; and his native district of Nuddea contains, as Orissa does, many Chaitanya images under actual worship. Dr. Bhattacharya writing of the Chaitanya sect says:—

> The sect that he has founded has developed into a gigantic body which threatens to throw into shade the representatives of his old enemies, if not to make them all humble followers.

Assuming that Chaitanya was no divinity but a simple religious reformer, impelled by the strength of his devotion to proclaim his doctrines, we have in him another instance of deification so thorough and complete, that, even before he died, his image was installed for worship and the incidents of his life were modified and magnified into miracles which proved his divine nature. There is nothing strange if we remember that such has been the rule in the case of every great reformer from *Buddha* down to *Ramakrishna Paramahamsa*, the Saint of Dakshineswar, who is the most recent instance of this process of deification.